





1000

700

500



# OUR MODERN DEBT TO ISRAEL

BY

EDWARD CHAUNCEY BALDWIN, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of English Literature  
at the University of Illinois



BOSTON  
SHERMAN, FRENCH & COMPANY  
1913

COPYRIGHT, 1913  
SHERMAN, FRENCH & COMPANY

LIBRARY  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA  
SANTA BARBARA

And throned on her hills sits Jerusalem yet,  
But with dust on her forehead, and chains on her feet;  
For the crown of her pride to the mocker hath gone,  
And the holy Shechinah is dark where it shone.

• • • • •  
Oh, the outward hath gone! but in glory and power,  
The spirit surviveth the things of an hour;  
Unchanged, undecaying, its Pentecost flame  
On the heart's secret altar is burning the same!

—Whittier, "Palestine."



## PREFACE

That the world is at last awaking to a sense of its obligation to Israel and to Israelitish thought there can be no question. The evidence of such an awakening is found in the amazing output during the last decade of books dealing with the literature of Israel.

Yet among all these books, none, so far as the author is aware, has attempted to show what our modern debt is to the three classes that together molded and guided the thought of Israel — the prophets, the priests, and the sages. Who these men were, and what they did for Israel, and, through Israel, for the world at large is still very vaguely understood by the general reader.

To supply this lack of exact knowledge this little book is written. It is not intended for the specialist, but for the layman. Nor does it pretend to be the result of scholarly research. The material of which it is composed is accessible to all who have the time and patience to collect it. The book aims simply to present briefly the results of modern scholarship so far as this scholarship reveals the extent of our modern obligation to ancient Israel. The author's acknowledgments are due to the editors of *The Biblical World* and the *B'nai B'rith News* for their per-

## PREFACE

mission to make use of certain material which has previously appeared in those journals.

Should the book help to clarify some hazy notions, and, incidentally, to substitute for grudging tolerance of a maligned race, a generous respect, the purpose of the author will have been achieved.

Urbana, Illinois,  
September 1, 1913.

## CONTENTS

	PAGE
I THE LITERATURE OF ISRAEL . . . . .	1

The rediscovery of the Old Testament. Two reasons for its previous neglect — men's discontent with the textual study of it, and the difficulty of understanding it. Results of the application of the methods of modern scholarship — a revitalization of the Old Testament, and an awaking of the modern world to a fuller recognition of its obligation to Israel. Incidental discoveries made by modern scholars — that the Old Testament is the literature, *viz.* the record of the life, of a uniquely gifted race. Peculiarities of Hebrew literature — its variety and its unity. The progress of its formal development. Early poetry. Hebrew literature the result of the inspired thinking of three groups of leaders — the prophets, the priests and the sages

II THE PROPHETS . . . . .	18
---------------------------	----

The nature of the prophetic function as understood by the Hebrews themselves. The prophets, spokesmen or interpreters for God. Their predictions few and always conditional. Historical development of prophecy. "Sons of the prophets." Prophets an inde-

pendent order — their radicalism and their idealism. Their resultant social position. Their dress and way of life. Method of delivering their message — the oral and the written form. Written prophecy dramatic. Examples of prophetic dialogue. Three fundamental propositions of Hebrew prophecy. Amos's emphasis upon righteousness. Hosea and mercy. Isaiah's philosophy of history and his insistence upon humility. Micah's summary of the teaching of the preceding prophets. His formula for right living. Zephaniah on national sin and retribution. Nahum's view of tyranny. Habakkuk's message — "The just shall live by faith." Jeremiah's tragic life and the outcome — his belief that religion is an individual, not a national, matter. The Exile — its influence, social and economic, and upon the intellectual and emotional life of the Jewish race. Ezekiel's more spiritualized conception of Jehovah. His vision of religious fellowship. The first Utopia. A comparison with Plato's. The second Isaiah's answer to the question, What is Israel's vocation? Zechariah's visions. Malachi's recognition of the value of heathen worship. Jonah's protest against intolerance.

### III THE INFLUENCE OF THE PROPHETS UPON MODERN THOUGHT . . . 87

The prophetic hope of a kingdom of God on earth. The prophetic ideal a social one, akin to that of those who to-

day are working for a better social order.

IV THE PRIESTS . . . . . 95

The priests and the prophets radically opposed. Social position of the priests. Their dress. The priestly function. Their message delivered partly through symbolic acts connected with the sacrifice. Meaning of sacrifice — communion preceded by atonement. The hortatory message of the priests, delivered through the law. Development of Hebrew law. Israel's early codes — their uniqueness. Fundamental ideas embodied in them. Deuteronomy — law written under prophetic influence. The levitical code, a manual of religious customs and practices. The "holiness code" as an expression of Jewish longing for social justice. Its provisions, contrasted with those of Roman law, for the humane treatment of slaves, and for the welfare of the poor. Effect of the growing supremacy of the priests.

V THE DEBT OF ISRAEL AND THE WORLD  
TO HEBREW LAW . . . . . 134

Effect of Hebrew law upon the racial consciousness of Israel. Christendom's debt to the priests — institutionally e. g. Sabbath observance, Easter, the eucharist, baptism. Not less important obligations to the priests, certain conceptions of God and of what He requires of men. Holiness as an attribute

of God, and a virtue to be sought by men through the keeping of the law.

VI THE SAGES . . . . . 152

Hebrew estimate of the religious value of the three groups into which they divided their literature. The place of "The Writings," the work of the sages in the regard of the Hebrew people. The Sages, unlike the prophets, concerned chiefly with the individual, with the upbuilding of personal character, and the promotion of individual righteousness. The Sages Israel's moral philosophers. Their position as leaders of Hebrew thought. Their aim and function. Their method of work. Meaning of wisdom. Its inclusiveness. Emphasis upon conduct. Cosmopolitanism. Evidence of foreign influence upon it. Its uniqueness. Beginning and end of wisdom — humility and reverence. Forms of wisdom. The proverb, the sages' use of the descriptive method.

VII OUR MODERN DEBT TO THE SAGES . 177

This obligation mostly to be looked for in our modern ideals of character. Hebrew, compared with other ideals of the ancient world. Other ethical ideas which the modern world owes to the sages — the seven deadly sins, and the seven cardinal virtues. The Epistle of James as a connecting link between the wisdom of the Old and the New Testament.

	PAGE
VIII THE MESSAGE OF ISRAEL TO THE MODERN WORLD . . . . .	200

Israel's message, the answer to three questions, and given through three classes of leaders of Hebrew thought. These leaders unlike in their methods, and divergent in their aims. Their disagreement only apparent. The importance of our modern debt to them. Our modern social ideals due to a belated recognition of our obligation to them. How these ideals find expression. Probable results of these ideals becoming dominant forces in the lives of common men — a new zeal for righteousness, world peace, a better social order.



## CHAPTER I

### THE LITERATURE OF ISRAEL

We of the present generation are peculiarly fortunate in that we have been privileged to live in parts of two centuries. Having seen the close of one century and the opening years of another, we can look, Janus-wise, both forward and backward — forward with confident hope toward the years that are to be, and backward with some justness of appreciation upon the century just closed. Even at this distance, we can with some certainty decide what was the contribution of the nineteenth century to the progress of the race. Yet, when we ask what was the great accomplishment of that century, we get as many answers as there are interests dear to men's hearts. The business man will tell us that the great achievement of the nineteenth century was the commercial development of the age — the substitution of the principle of combination for the old principle of competition, and the supplanting of the old idea of rivalry by the new idea of coöperation. And perhaps we should accept his statement as true, did not further inquiries unsettle our conviction. The educator will tell us that the most

## 2 OUR MODERN DEBT TO ISRAEL

splendid work of the century was the growth of popular education, which has resulted in making illiteracy comparatively rare. The scientist will tell us that the highest attainment of the century was scientific, and will remind us that science has indeed within the last fifty years opened before us a new heaven and a new earth. With equal confidence, the politician will assure us that the glory of the nineteenth century was the development of popular liberty, and by way of confirmation will point to the indisputable fact that there is more freedom in the world to-day than ever before in human history. Yet they would all be wrong. The crowning glory of the nineteenth century was not the founding of the trusts, nor the enabling of the man in the street to read and write, nor the discovery of radium, nor even the establishment upon a firm basis of the great modern republics, but the rediscovery of the Old Testament.

“Rediscovery,” one may object, “I was not aware that the Old Testament had ever been lost.” Yet the word is an appropriate one, for there was a time within the memory of men now living when the Old Testament seemed in danger of becoming a neglected, if not a forgotten, book. For this neglect and oblivion there were two reasons. Men were tired of the old textual study, and they found the Old Testament hard to understand.

For their discontent with the old textual study

there was abundant justification. It led those who followed it into the strangest absurdities. Indeed it often resulted in what we might call bibliomancy — the treatment, that is, of the text as if it were a kind of Delphic oracle. For example, when John Wesley had to decide whether he would go down to Ipswich to preach, he stuck a pin between the leaves of his Bible and read the first text that caught his eye. If it happened to be "So he (Jonah) paid the fare thereof and went down," Wesley at once paid his fare, and went. If it was "Let him that is on the house-top not go down," Wesley, with equal promptness, decided not to go. If he found nothing so pertinent to his perplexity as either of these passages, he twisted what he did find into some pertinency by a mystical or symbolical interpretation; or else he tried again. But it is not necessary to go so far back as to the time of Wesley to find illustrations of the absurdities into which men were led by the textual method of study. A few years ago, a judge of the supreme court of the state of New York handed down a decision in which he said, "We have the highest possible authority for saying 'Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life.'" The next day, the New York *Herald*, in an exultant, and, as it seemed to some devout souls, almost blasphemous editorial, announced that the passage quoted had been looked up, and that it was the devil who said it. "Now," said the

#### 4 OUR MODERN DEBT TO ISRAEL

writer, "we know who is regarded by our supreme court judges as the highest judicial authority in the Empire State."<sup>1</sup>

An even more adequate reason for the former neglect of the Old Testament is found in the difficulty of understanding it. In the first place more than two thirds of it is poetry; and for the intelligent reading of poetry a certain amount of training seems to be required to develop the artistic appreciation necessary for the enjoyment, and even for the understanding, of a literary genus devoted, not so much to the communication of ideas, as to the expression of feelings. Even the fact that the Old Testament is largely poetry might not have handicapped the student hopelessly, had he *known* that much of it was poetry. But, as Professor Moulton has pointed out,<sup>2</sup> the Bible is the worst printed book in the world. "No other monument of ancient or modern literature," says Professor Moulton, "suffers the fate of being put before us in a form that makes it impossible, without strong effort and considerable training, to take in elements of literary structure which in all other books are conveyed directly to the eye in a manner impossible to mistake." Moreover, the difficulty was increased by the fact that the Old Testament is an oriental book, and that the poetry is oriental poetry. Its

<sup>1</sup> The illustration is borrowed from Abbott, *Life and Literature of the Ancient Hebrews*, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> *Literary Study of the Bible*, p. 45.

versification is totally different, not only from that of English poetry, but from that of any other language with which the student is likely to be conversant. Its constant use of symbolism, and its warmth and fervor still further differentiate it from western poetry, either ancient or modern. Furthermore, the intelligent appreciation of the Old Testament was made immensely more difficult by its being an *ancient* oriental book. The back-ground, the life it records, is that of the ancient Semitic world, a world as far removed from ours as the East is from the West — and farther too, for between that ancient life and ours there intervene, not only the deep cleavage between the Orient and the Occident, but the long centuries that separate us from it.

This seemingly impassable gulf the Biblical scholarship of the last two decades has done much to bridge. The modern science of archaeology has summoned from the ancient monuments a cloud of witnesses to correct, or confirm the Biblical data. Modern philology has, through the discovery of ancient documents, thrown a flood of light upon the Biblical text. The sciences of sociology and comparative religion, and studies in modern oriental life have all contributed their share to the bridging of the chasm.<sup>2a</sup>

The result of the substitution of the literary and historical study of the Old Testament for

<sup>2a</sup> See Kent, *Origin and Permanent Value of the Old Testament*, pp. 10 ff.

## 6 OUR MODERN DEBT TO ISRAEL

the older textual method of approach has been such as to prove wholly unfounded the fear shared by many lest the work of Biblical scholars would be wholly destructive. On the contrary, nothing essential has been lost. Though some of the mystery has disappeared, that lack has been more than compensated by what has been gained. To those of us who have tried it, the historical, or literary, method of study means the rediscovery of the Hebrew scriptures. In the light that has been thrown upon them by the reverent study of modern Biblical scholars, prophet, priest and sage are seen no longer as vague and shadowy figures in a past distant and unreal, but are brought before us, as Tissot, the French painter, brings them before us, in the garb and in the surroundings in which they lived. And their words, like their personalities, have become vital—alive with messages for to-day, messages which we in this age cannot afford to ignore. Undoubtedly the most important result of the new interest in Hebrew literature has been the awakening of the world to a keener realization of the incalculable debt that it owes to Israel and to Israelitish thought. We have at last come to understand that modern culture, both artistic and ethical, goes back to Athens and to Jerusalem, but that English culture owes far more to the Hebrew than to the Greek.<sup>3</sup> By clearly revealing the contributions made to our intellectual and moral life by the

<sup>3</sup> See Milman, *History of the Jews*, Book XXX., and my

leaders of Israelitish thought, modern scholars have shown that we are what we are, not only morally but intellectually, as a result of the influence of Moses, David, Solomon, Isaiah, of Paul, and of Jesus, rather than as a result of the influence of Homer, Hesiod, Sophocles, Aristophanes, Plato, and Aristotle.

In the process of making clear to the modern world its obligation to Israel, scholars have made certain discoveries, which, like most discoveries after they have been made, seem so obvious now as to be self evident. They have found that the Hebrew resembles other literatures in being the record of the life of a race. As English literature is the record of the thoughts and feelings of the greatest Englishmen for the last five hundred years, so the Old Testament is the record of the thoughts and feelings of the greatest Hebrews through nearly a thousand years.

But while Hebrew resembles other literatures in being the record of the life of the race that produced it, it differs from other literatures in the life it records. The life of the Hebrew race was indeed the life of a peculiar people. They called themselves "the chosen people," and such they really were, not "chosen" in a different sense, but for a different purpose from the other great nations

article, "The Hebrew and the Greek Ideas of Life," in *The Biblical World*, Nov., 1910.

See, also, J. R. Green, *A Short History of the English People*, Chap. VIII., Sec. I.

## 8 OUR MODERN DEBT TO ISRAEL

of antiquity. God chose the Greeks to teach the world a knowledge of beauty, and endowed them with a feeling for proportion, and with a love of symmetry, in short, with a highly developed artistic sense that fitted them to become the apostles of beauty for all humanity. Similarly, God chose the Romans to teach the world the rudiments of the science of government; and to that end gave to the Roman people a genius for law and administration. Some of us like to think that God has chosen the Anglo-Saxon race to teach the world self-government, and that our race has been for that very purpose uniquely gifted with a genius for governing itself. Be that as it may, the calling and endowment of the Hebrew race was in no sense more miraculous than that of the Greek or the Roman. It differed only in the mission for which the race was chosen. God chose the Hebrew race to teach the world a knowledge of religion, and to that end bestowed upon the race a genius for religion, an inherent faculty, that is, for recognizing, understanding, and expressing "the life of God in the soul of man."

The possession of this unique endowment constituted their sole claim to recognition as one of the great nations of antiquity. Nothing better illustrates the truth that God seems often to choose the weak things of the earth to confound the mighty, and the things that are not to bring to naught the things that are than the history of the Hebrews. Unlike their neighbors, the As-

syrians, they were not a learned people. The Assyrians gave to the world the beginnings of modern science. Our knowledge of astronomy, for example, had its beginnings in Assyria, whose astrologers are said to have determined within two seconds the exact length of the solar year, and not to have been far wrong in their computation of the distances of the sun, moon and planets from the earth. Nor were the Hebrews an artistic people, like their neighbors on the south, the Egyptians. To the latter the modern world owes the beginnings of art, for the arts of sculpture and architecture flourished in Egypt more than a thousand years before the Parthenon or the Pantheon were built. The Doric column and the Roman arch were neither Greek nor Roman in origin, but Egyptian. The Hebrews, on the other hand, carved no statues; they painted no pictures; even their architecture was not their own, but was borrowed from the Phœnicians. The first Temple was built, not by Hebrew, but by Phœnician architects. Unlike the Phœnicians, they were not a commercial people. The commercial instincts of the modern Jew are not an inherent racial characteristic, but have been acquired. The Phœnicians were the great traders of antiquity. The international trade of the ancient world was practically all in the hands of Phœnician merchants, and was carried on by Phœnician ships. These ships sailed even to what were then literally the ends of the earth, to

## 10 OUR MODERN DEBT TO ISRAEL

Tartessus in Spain, whence they were called “ships of Tarshish,” a phrase that seems to have been used much as the term “Cunarder” was used a generation ago, or as “Dreadnaught” is employed to-day, as a generic term to mean a great ship. Though the “ships of Tarshish” furnished many a beautiful symbol to the poets of Israel, the Hebrews were not a maritime people. They had no foreign commerce worth mentioning. What little foreign trade they had was carried on through the Phoenicians.

Even geographically the Hebrews were seemingly least important of the great nations of antiquity. We seldom stop to think how very small the little pear-shaped country of Palestine (the “West-land”) really was. It was only one hundred and forty miles from Dan to Beersheba, and only forty from the Jordan to the sea. A line drawn from Chicago west to Aurora, south to Decatur, east to the Indiana border, and north again to Chicago would enclose it in an area much less than a quarter of the state of Illinois.

Yet, in spite of their being seemingly the weakest of all the great nations of antiquity, the debt of the modern world to them is immeasurably greater than that to the Assyrians, the Egyptians, and the Phoenicians combined; and it is so because their genius, though neither scientific nor artistic, nor commercial, was ethical and religious.

The religious genius of the race found expression in their literature — the so-called Old Tes-

tament. Regarding this literature, also, modern scholars have made certain discoveries. They have found that the Old Testament is not a book, nor a part of a book, but a library — that it is really what Saint Jerome long ago called the Bible, “a divine library,” that it consists of thirty-six books bound together into one volume. They found that these thirty-six books were a collection of varied literary forms, written by many different authors, at periods of time, some of them, widely separate, and for widely differing sets of readers. Probably the most striking characteristic of these books is their variety. The contents of the Old Testament are as varied as if one should bind together into one volume John Knox’s *History of the Reformation*, Horace Bushnell’s *Sermons*, Bacon’s *Essays*, Cowper’s *Letters*, Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress*, and a hymn book. Every form of literary interest is represented in it.

Yet the Old Testament is far more than a splendid miscellany. With all its variety, it possesses a unity obvious and unmistakable. The whole collection is unified by the fact of its being a chronicle of the religious development of the Hebrew people. It is a record of a gradually unfolding revelation, to a people divinely gifted spiritually, of God’s dealings with humanity. The Old Testament, then, is characterized by variety and unity, for it is a collection of books of widely differing literary forms, brought together into

## 12 OUR MODERN DEBT TO ISRAEL

one volume which is unified by the historical development that it discloses, and because of the growth of spiritual consciousness that it reveals.

Though differentiated from other literatures by its unity, Hebrew literature, nevertheless, resembles them in the progress of its formal development. The order of the books in our Old Testament is entirely misleading, for Hebrew literature did not begin with historical prose. Like the literatures of other peoples, it began with lyric poetry. Of this early poetry but little has survived, and that little is scattered through the historical books. In writing the histories, which were for the most part compilations of pre-existent material, the historians borrowed freely from certain collections of this early poetry. Of these old anthologies the names of two are mentioned as the sources of some of the songs embodied in the historical books. These are the Book of the Wars of Jehovah<sup>4</sup> and the Book of Jashar.<sup>5</sup> From the excerpts, it appears that these were collections of national songs celebrating the deeds of Israel's heroes. From them, or from other similar anthologies, is quoted, also, the Song of Lamech, sometimes called the "Song of the Sword," which is probably one of the oldest fragments extant of primitive Hebrew lyric poetry. It is found in the fourth chapter of Genesis, and consists of only six verses.

<sup>4</sup> Num. 21:14 ff.

<sup>5</sup> Josh. 10:13 ff. 2 Sam. 1:18.

Adah and Zilla, hear my voice;  
Ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my speech:  
For I have slain a man for wounding me,  
And a young man for bruising me:  
If Cain shall be avenged seven fold,  
Truly Lamech seventy and seven-fold.

The primitive savagery of this little song of revenge is itself a proof of its antiquity. Yet, simple and primitive as it is, it illustrates as well as a more elaborate example would, the essential characteristics of Hebrew poetry.

Hebrew versification is not, like Greek and Roman versification, based on quantity, or the time it takes to pronounce certain syllables; nor, like old English poetry, upon the principle of a scheme of accents and alliteration; nor, like the poetry of modern languages, upon a basis of regularly recurring accents; but on a system of parallelism, each verse of a couplet being repeated in a slightly different form, like a sound and its echo. If we look closely at the little poem above quoted, we shall see that the statements occur in pairs, the second of each pair being in a sense an echo of the preceding. Thus, the assertions in the second couplet

I have slain a man for wounding me  
And a young man for bruising me

are not meant to imply that Lamech had killed two men. The doubling of the statement is merely

## 14 OUR MODERN DEBT TO ISRAEL

the characteristic poetic parallelism.<sup>6</sup> To this parallelism Watts-Dunton has applied the more suggestive name “sense-rhythm,” and Dr. Van Dyke, the term “thought-rhyme.” Both designations emphasize the fact that the controlling rhythm is the rhythm of meaning, a thought-measure, rather than a form-measure.

Of this thought-rhyme there are usually distinguished four varieties. The second verse may repeat the thought of the first,<sup>7</sup> as when Joshua sang,

Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon,  
And thou Moon, in the valley of Aijalon;

where we have synonymous parallelism. Or, the thought of the first verse is emphasized by a contrasting statement in the second, as in the closing couplet of Deborah's song,<sup>8</sup>

So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord:  
But let them that love thee be as the sun when he  
goeth forth in his might.

This is called antithetical parallelism. Again, the second verse may be neither a repetition nor a contrast to the first, but may supplement or

<sup>6</sup> Bishop Lowth first gave to this balanceing of the parts of the sentence, one against another, the familiar name of parallelism. Lowth, *Sacra Poesi Hebraeorum Praelectiones*, 1753.

<sup>7</sup> The Hebrew stanza, though normally consisting of two verses, may be, and often is, expanded into a tercet, or even to a quatrain.

<sup>8</sup> Judges 5:31.

complete it by stating a comparison, a reason, a motive, or a consequence. Examples are:

As cold water to a thirsty soul,  
So is good news from a far country.

Ye mountains of Gilboa! Let there be no dew nor  
rain upon you . . .  
For there the shield of the mighty was vilely cast  
away.

Publish it not in the streets of Ashkelon;  
Lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice.

Answer not a fool according to his folly:  
Lest thou be like him.

This is known as synthetic parallelism. A fourth variety is the climactic. In this form the first verse does not form a complete sentence, and the second repeats certain words from it and finishes the statement.

Give unto the Lord, O ye sons of the mighty,  
Give unto the Lord glory and strength.

The ultimate source of the Hebrew form of versification<sup>9</sup> is unknown.<sup>10</sup> Probably it came direct from nature. Life itself is rhythmical, walking, breathing, the action of the heart; and, in

<sup>9</sup> For a more complete exposition of the characteristics of Hebrew versification, see Driver, *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, Chap. VIII.

<sup>10</sup> Babylonian and Egyptian poetry share with it the common Semitic parallelism.

## 16 OUR MODERN DEBT TO ISRAEL

external nature, such common phenomena as the ebb and flow of the tide, all help to make parallelism seem the most natural form in which emotional thought could find expression. Dean Stanley said of it:

“‘The rapid strokes as of alternate wings,’ ‘the heaving and sinking as of the troubled heart,’ which have been beautifully described as the essence of the parallel structure of Hebrew verse, are exactly suited for the endless play of human feeling, and for the understanding of every age and nation.”

Because it was suited “for the understanding of every age and nation,” and because it did not depend for its effect upon meter and rhyme, which cannot be transferred from one language to another, Hebrew poetry loses comparatively little in translation. Because it possesses “a rhythm largely independent of the features, prosodical or other, of any individual language—a rhythm free, varied and indeterminate, or rather determinate only by what has been called ‘the energy of the spirit which sings within the bosom of him who speaks,’ and therefore adaptable to every emotion, from the most delicate to the most energetic,”<sup>11</sup> it was suited, as no other poetry could be, to be rendered almost without loss in English.

The story of the development of Hebrew litera-

<sup>11</sup> “The Authorized Version and its Influence,” by Professor A. S. Cook, in Vol. IV. of the *Cambridge History of English Literature*.

ture through lyric and ballad and prose heroic legend, and connected prose historical narrative to the prophetic literature of the eighth century — the earliest books that have come down to us in their original form — is too long a story to be repeated here. The reader will find it given at length in many popular handbooks now readily accessible.<sup>12</sup>

As we have it, in its completed form, the literature of Israel (the Old Testament) represents roughly a thousand years of divinely guided thought of the three classes of leaders who together guided and molded the thoughts of Israel. These leaders were the prophets, the priests, and the sages. What these three classes who produced the literature of Israel really were; what they stood for in the life of the nation; and, finally, what each class contributed to the ethical equipment of Israel, and through Israel, to the modern world is to be the subject of our consideration. We may naturally begin with the prophets.

<sup>12</sup> One of the most readable accounts of the development of Hebrew literature is to be found in Fowler's *History of the Literature of Ancient Israel From the Earliest Times to 135 B. C.*, pp. 10-104.

## CHAPTER II

### THE PROPHETS

In view of the importance of the prophets, both for their own times, and for any study of the influence of Israel upon modern thought, it is imperative that one should clearly understand what was the prophetic function. Exactly who these sixteen men were, what they aspired for and did, what they were for their time and what they still are for ours, what portion of our common stock of ethical ideas we owe to them—these are questions about which the average man has only the vaguest ideas. Without having thought much about it, he supposes that prophecy was “history written beforehand,”<sup>1</sup> and that the prophet’s special duty and significance consisted in foretelling the coming of Christ. Such a supposition, it seems hardly necessary to point out, is totally unjust both to the character and to the importance of Israelitish prophecy. Prediction

<sup>1</sup> Justin Martyr’s definition of the word prophet, which represents a prevalent misconception that has persisted even to our own time, is found in the first *Apologia* CXXXI, “There were among the Jews certain men who were prophets of God, through whom the prophetic spirit published beforehand things that were to come to pass ere ever they happened.”

was indeed a part of the prophetic work, but it was by no means exclusively the prophetic function.

Prophecy was occupied with the destinies of the kingdom of God — sometimes even the far-distant consummation and glory of the kingdom. But, though the prophet looked forward rather than backward, though indeed the prophets lived in the future in a sense that the priests and the sages did not, we must not restrict prophecy to the foretelling of the future. The prophets were essentially men of the present.

Their mission was to save Israel by recalling the nation to the obligations of the covenant. They were not soothsayers. Only occasionally do they venture predictions, and then only as an expression of their sublime faith. Moreover, all their predictions were conditional, and were so understood at the time they were uttered. Jonah, for example, first refused his mission to Nineveh because he feared that his prediction of the coming destruction of the city would, on account of the people's repentence, be unfulfilled; that is, he knew that the fulfillment of his prophecy depended upon the conduct of the people whose destruction he foretold. Thus it has happened that many a dire announcement of impending doom has been unrealized, and that the fulfillment of many a glorious prediction has been long deferred, because both were conditional, and because conditions, upon which the predictions were contingent, changed.

## 20 OUR MODERN DEBT TO ISRAEL

No better corrective for the popular misconception of the true prophetic function can be found than an examination of the etymology of the Hebrew word for prophet, for by this means we can find out what the Hebrews themselves understood by it. The Hebraic word for prophet is closely allied to an Arabic word that means to proclaim something, or to carry out some mandate.<sup>2</sup> It would appear, therefore, that the Hebrew word in its root meaning signified the delivery of some message, and that the prophet was a deputed speaker. That such actually was the fundamental meaning of the word among the Hebrews appears from a passage in Exodus,<sup>3</sup> where we are told that Moses hesitated and drew back from his vocation to deliver Israel, saying, "O Lord, I am not a man of words, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: for I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue." And the Lord, accordingly, designated Aaron as Moses' spokesman, saying, "And he shall be thy prophet unto the people: and it shall come to pass that he shall be to thee a mouth, and thou shalt be to him as God." So it appears that Aaron was to be Moses' prophet in the same sense that Moses was to be God's prophet. He was to be his spokesman or interpreter.

<sup>2</sup> Several alternative derivations of the Hebrew word for prophet are discussed by L. W. Batten in *The Hebrew Prophet*, p. 344; in Hastings's *Bible Dictionary*, article "Prophet"; and in Cornill's *Prophets of Israel*, pp. 6 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Ex. 4:10 ff.

Such a conception, involving the idea that God revealed his will to certain selected individuals, who thus became his interpreters, was a gradual growth; and this growth, or historical development, is involved in considerable obscurity. It is quite probable that prophecy is an outgrowth of "divination." Of the "diviners" and their methods we know comparatively little, except that they were men who sought to discover the divine will by external means — arrows, rods, and the sacred lot. Joseph, we are told,<sup>4</sup> was a diviner; and Balaam also was such at least by reputed calling.<sup>5</sup> The art of divination seems to have been borrowed originally from the Canaanites,<sup>6</sup> and was by the provisions of the Deuteronomic code<sup>7</sup> expressly forbidden as "an abomination unto the Lord." It seems, however, never entirely to have disappeared in Israel; both Isaiah and Micah<sup>8</sup> in the eighth century, and in the post-exilic period, Zechariah<sup>9</sup> referring contemptuously to the false prophets as diviners. Succeeding the diviners, and immediately preceding the prophets were the "seers,"<sup>10</sup> whose function was to disclose to individuals the secrets of the present and of the immediate future. The office of the seer was somewhat similar to that of the modern clairvoyant.

<sup>4</sup> Gen. 44:15.

<sup>8</sup> Is. 44:25; Mic. 3:6.

<sup>5</sup> Num. 22:7, 18.

<sup>9</sup> Zech. 10:2.

<sup>6</sup> I Sam. 6:2.

<sup>10</sup> I Sam. 9:9.

<sup>7</sup> Deut. 18:10-14.

## 22 OUR MODERN DEBT TO ISRAEL

To him men went to “inquire of the Lord,” as formerly they had gone to the priest to obtain the sacred oracle by means of the sacred lot, the “Urim and Thummim.” For such services, the seer was paid a fee; a quarter of a shekel in at least one instance<sup>11</sup> is mentioned as the amount required. Samuel, to whom this fee was to be paid, was the first to represent in a complete degree the development of the idea of “prophet” as the mouth-piece of God. It is noteworthy that the Hebrews themselves seem to have regarded him as the first of the prophetic line; at all events, the author of Hebrews in the muster-roll of the national heroes mentions “Samuel and the prophets,”<sup>12</sup> as if he headed the list. Moses, to be sure, is frequently spoken of as a prophet, but in such a way as to suggest that the term was applied to him in a retrospective sense. There is nothing to indicate that he was ever called a prophet in his own day. Samuel undoubtedly represents the completion of the long development covering many centuries, the stages of which are traceable in the names that were successively applied to the man supposed to be on somewhat intimate terms with God.

It is in the time of Samuel that we first hear of communities of prophets. They seem to have congregated about the several local sanctuaries, for the places mentioned as their residences were local centers of Jehovah-worship. Such were Ramah in

<sup>11</sup> I Sam. 9:8.

<sup>12</sup> Heb. 11:32.

Mount Ephraim; <sup>13</sup> Bethel in the same vicinity; <sup>14</sup> Gibeah in Benjamin; <sup>15</sup> Jericho on the Jordan <sup>16</sup> and Gilgal.<sup>17</sup> The number of these groups of prophets at this particular time and their close association with the worship of the period were resultant upon the awakening of patriotism caused by the rigors of Philistine oppression. This seems to have been more severe than any the nation had suffered hitherto. It certainly was sufficient to call forth a new national spirit; and in Israel patriotism and religion were, if not synonymous, at least correlative terms. Israel's enemies were looked upon as foes of Jehovah; and only by His help could Israel hope to throw off the yoke of the oppressors. The oppression of the nation by a foreign enemy was, consequently, the signal for the appearance of a more devout adherence to the Captain of the Hosts of Israel, and of a more fervid patriotism.

The patriotic fervor of these groups of prophets seems not to have been altogether according to knowledge. They expressed it by singing, dancing, and an excitation of manner analogous to the deportment of the modern oriental dervish.<sup>18</sup> Like all emotional excitement, that of the prophets was highly contagious.<sup>19</sup> The story is told that when Saul in pursuit of David went to Naoth, he

<sup>13</sup> I Sam. 19:18.

<sup>17</sup> II Kings 4:38.

<sup>14</sup> II Kings 2:3.

<sup>18</sup> I Sam. 10:5.

<sup>15</sup> I Sam. 10:5, 10.

<sup>19</sup> I Sam. 19:20-24.

<sup>16</sup> II Kings 2:5.

## 24 OUR MODERN DEBT TO ISRAEL

caught the prophetic spirit, “ and he also stripped off his clothes, and he also prophesied before Samuel, and fell down naked all that day and all that night. Wherefore they say, is Saul also among the prophets? <sup>20</sup> This saying has been misinterpreted, and the prevalent opinion of the prophetic ecstasy, consequently, misunderstood. They did not mean to ask why so worldly a man found himself in so exalted company, but rather how so distinguished a person could feel at home in such questionable society.

Though there is no evidence that Samuel originated these prophetic communities, he seems to have been in close relation with them, appearing at the head of one of them in the passage just referred to.<sup>21</sup> The probability is that he saw the value of the religious patriotism of the prophets, and that he allied himself with them as a means of promoting the end he had in view, the establishment of a theocracy, a kingdom of God on earth.

In the attempt to realize this dream of a kingdom of God on earth through the establishment of the monarchy upon a firm basis, Samuel and his successors, Elijah and Elisha,<sup>22</sup> worked in close relation with the reigning king. They acted as his counsellors, and addressed him in the name of God; through him directly influencing governmental policies. Later, in the reign of kings out

<sup>20</sup> I Sam. 19:24.

<sup>21</sup> I Sam. 19:20.

<sup>22</sup> These men were often called by the Hebrews “ The former prophets.”

of sympathy with the theocratic idea, such an alliance became impossible. Hence arose the separation of religion and politics, and the complete independence of the prophetic order, the prophets taking their place over against all classes as the immediate servants of Jehovah. They no longer headed political movements, nor allied themselves with any political party in the state. Unlike the priests, who were the staunch supporters of the existing order, the prophets were always protestants. Theirs was invariably the voice of protest against existing conditions, against the tendency to degrade the worship of Jehovah into a sensuous ritualism, and against the mistaken policy of trying to strengthen the political life of the nation by worldly alliances with their idolatrous neighbors.

Their attitude of insurgency naturally brought them into conflict with the priests. As the steadfast upholders of the established order in church and state, the latter looked, with the distrust that the conservative always feels for the radical, upon the idealism of the prophets. Their general attitude is perfectly exemplified in the position taken by Amaziah, the priest of the sanctuary at Bethel on the occasion of the preaching of Amos. After having complained to King Jeroboam, charging Amos with conspiring to incite a rebellion against the king's authority, he sarcastically advises the prophet to go back to Judah whence he had come, saying, "O thou seer, go, flee thee away

## 26 OUR MODERN DEBT TO ISRAEL

into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there: but prophesy not again any more at Bethel: for it is the king's sanctuary, and it is a royal house.”<sup>23</sup>

The priests' dislike of the prophets was on the whole well founded, for the prophets not only disparaged the priestly office, but depreciated the whole ceremonial system with which the priests were identified. Amos decries the idea that the sacrificial cult was of ancient origin: “Did you bring me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel?”<sup>24</sup> he asks ironically. Even more denunciatory of the priests is Hosea. Including both the royal house and their supporters, the priestly hierarchy, in one sweeping arraignment, he cries out, “Hear this, O ye priests, and hearken O house of Israel, and give ear, O house of the king, for unto you pertaineth the judgment: for ye have been a snare at Mizpah, and a net spread upon Tabor.”<sup>25</sup> He even charges the priests with the most revolting crimes.<sup>26</sup> In contrast to the polluted sacrifices of such “blind mouths,” God, he says, desires “mercy and not sacrifice, and knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.”<sup>27</sup>

Partly owing to their recalcitrant attitude toward the ruling class, the social position of the prophets was relatively lower than that of the

<sup>23</sup> Amos 7:12, 13.

<sup>26</sup> Hos. 6:9.

<sup>24</sup> Am. 5:25.

<sup>27</sup> Hos. 6:6.

<sup>25</sup> Hos. 5:1.

priests, who were the most influential class in the Hebrew state. Such social inferiority was reflected in their dress. In contrast to the white robes of the priests, they wore a somber-hued mantle of camel's hair. This became a symbol of the prophetic office in much the same way as the clerical coat, the cassock waistcoat, and white tie of the modern clergyman are badges of his office. When Elijah was commissioned to anoint Elisha as his successor, he found Elisha plowing in the field, and cast upon him his mantle.<sup>28</sup> Saul readily recognized Samuel by the mantle, when, at his request, the witch of Endor summoned the prophet from the abode of the dead.<sup>29</sup> Similarly, Ahaziah, when he hears that the person met by his messengers was "a man with a garment of hair, and girt with a girdle of leather about his loins," immediately identified him, saying, "It is Elijah, the Tishbite." The leather girdle is so frequently referred to as to make it probable that this, too, was an essential part of the prophet's costume.<sup>30</sup> There was also a distinguishing mark upon the forehead between the eyes, probably a scar following an incision. When the prophet went to meet Ahab, after the battle with the Syrians, he disguised himself "with his headband over his eyes," covering the characteristic scar. As soon as he took the headband away from his

<sup>28</sup> I Kings 19:16 ff.

<sup>29</sup> I Sam. 28:13 ff.

<sup>30</sup> See also Jer. 14, Matt. 3:4, Mark 1:6.

## 28 OUR MODERN DEBT TO ISRAEL

eyes, Ahab “discerned him that he was of the prophets.”<sup>31</sup>

Though some of the prophets were self-supporting, many of them seem to have lived in a precarious way upon the free-will offerings of the pious. A considerable source of income was the fees paid by those who came to consult them. Apparently these fees were not fixed, but varied with the circumstances of the giver, somewhat like the perquisites of the modern clergyman for performing the marriage ceremony. Though the rather modest sum of a quarter of a shekel (about sixteen cents) is once mentioned<sup>32</sup> as adequate, the fees paid were sometimes very large. When Ben-hadad, king of Syria, sent Hazael to meet Elisha to ask whether the king should recover from his illness, we are told that Hazael “took a present with him even of every good thing of Damascus, forty camels’ burden.”<sup>33</sup> In course of time the custom of accepting fees became so notorious an abuse that the greater prophets mention it more than once as one of the most flagrant evils of their time. Side by side with Ezekiel’s denunciation of the priests, is his arraignment of the mercenary prophets, who “go about like a roaring lion ravaging the prey: they have devoured souls; they take treasure and precious things; they have made her widows many in the midst thereof.”<sup>34</sup> The Second-Isaiah, also, protests in the same breath

<sup>31</sup> I Kings 20:35-41.

<sup>32</sup> I Sam. 9:7, 8.

<sup>33</sup> II Kings 8:7-9.

<sup>34</sup> Ezek. 22:25.

that "the priests teach for hire and the prophets divine for money."

The prophet's chief business, however, was not giving advice, either gratuitously or for a fee, but preaching. All the prophets were orators, and orators who spoke extempore, rather than essayists; and probably all the prophecies were delivered orally before being committed to writing.<sup>35</sup> Moreover, it is certain that the early prophecies were not only oral, but lyrical, and accompanied by music. The company of prophets that Saul met after his anointing were prophesying to the music of a psaltery, and a timbrel, and a pipe, and a harp played by minstrels who went before them.<sup>36</sup> Elisha, it will be remembered, called for a minstrel to accompany his discourse before the three kings. "And it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the hand of Jehovah came upon him."<sup>37</sup>

The occasions of the delivery of the prophetic addresses were mainly the popular gatherings at feasts, and for worship at the favorite shrines. Amos, for example, spoke at Bethel;<sup>38</sup> and the language of the indignant chief priest implies that Amos was out of order, not in speaking there, but

<sup>35</sup> A possible exception is Ezekiel's prophecy; but even in this there is no evidence to prove that any part of the book, unless it be chapters 40-48, was written before being delivered.

<sup>36</sup> I Sam. 10:5.

<sup>37</sup> II Kings 3:15.

<sup>38</sup> Amos 7:10.

## 30 OUR MODERN DEBT TO ISRAEL

only because he had inveighed against the king, who was regarded as the proprietor of the sanctuary. Jeremiah preached, standing "in the gate of the Lord's house;<sup>39</sup> and later when he was not allowed to enter the "house of the Lord," he commissioned Baruch to read his written prophecy on a great fast day before the Temple at Jerusalem.<sup>40</sup>

In their preaching, the prophets made an extensive use of at least one of the methods employed in our modern elementary schools. They taught by object lessons. Hosea gave to each of his three children names that reiterated every time they were pronounced the prophet's stern menace of overthrow for the northern kingdom.<sup>41</sup> Isaiah wore for three years the shameful garb of a slave to impress upon his contemporaries his grim prediction that the Egyptians, in whom the Hebrews trusted, would be led away captive by Assyria.<sup>42</sup> Similarly Jeremiah wore a wooden yoke, symbolic of the yoke of Assyrian servitude borne by the nations.<sup>43</sup> Some of the symbolic prophecies seem to have been literary illustrations rather than to have been actually performed. It is difficult to see, for example, how Jeremiah could have fulfilled in any literal way the command to lay great stones with mortar in the brick pavement "which is at the entry of Pharaoh's house in Tahpanhes."<sup>44</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Jer. 7:1.

<sup>42</sup> Is. 20:1-4.

<sup>40</sup> Jer. 36:9 ff.

<sup>43</sup> Jer. 28:10, 13.

<sup>41</sup> Hos. 1.

<sup>44</sup> Jer. 43:8, 9.

Such a piece of seeming vandalism as this would certainly have been bitterly resented by the Egyptians, and would probably have cost the prophet his life. Scarcely less fatal would have been such a test of endurance as that described in the fourth chapter of Ezekiel, where the prophet is commanded to lie on his left side for three hundred and ninety days, pointing with bared arm to a portrayal of the horrors of a siege; and having done this, to lie on his right side for forty days more, in a similar attitude, prophesying the while against the house of Judah.<sup>45</sup> The fact that these symbolic acts were not in all cases actually performed did not lessen their value as illustrations of the truths the prophets were trying to enforce, even though their appeal was through the written word.

In exchanging the written for the oral form, the prophets were not actuated by literary ambition. They were not trying to furnish classics for the perusal of a later age. The written was to serve the same purpose as the spoken word. In both his speaking and his writing, the prophet invariably addressed, not posterity, but his immediate contemporaries, speaking chiefly of present sin, and present duty. Moreover, it is highly improbable that many of the prophets could write, writing in ancient Israel being a highly specialized profession, followed by comparatively few. Some controlling necessity must have influenced

<sup>45</sup> Ezek. 4:1-8.

## 32 OUR MODERN DEBT TO ISRAEL

the prophets to change from the oral to the written form of appeal. What this necessity was we know, at least in the case of Jeremiah. For twenty-one years he had confined himself to oral preaching, but in the fourth year of king Jehoakim's reign, he dictated to Baruch the scribe, the prophecies he had hitherto delivered orally. "And Jeremiah commanded Baruch, saying, I am shut up; I cannot go into the house of the Lord: therefore go thou, and read in the roll, which thou hast written from my mouth, the words of the Lord in the ears of the people in the Lord's house upon the fast day. . . . It may be they will present their supplication before the Lord, and will return every one from his evil way. . . ." <sup>46</sup> The passage is deeply significant, both because it states the purpose of the writing, which is thus seen to be identical with the purpose of Jeremiah's oral preaching — namely, to recall Judah from its "evil way" — and because it also explicitly states the reason for the substitution of the written for the oral form of address. The reason is suggested by the statement "I am shut up, I cannot go into the house of the Lord." This has been interpreted <sup>47</sup> to mean, not that Jeremiah was in prison at the time, for this could not have been the case, but that he was in danger of his life, if he appeared in public. Indeed, as a result of Baruch's public reading of the roll before the

<sup>46</sup> Jer. 36:1-6.

<sup>47</sup> Batten, *The Hebrew Prophet*, p. 145.

king, an attempt was made to imprison both the prophet and the scribe. The significance of the whole incident is unmistakable. The change from the oral to the written form of prophecy was due to the fact that, for one reason or another, it had become impossible for the prophet to reach the ears of the people, so that he was obliged to have recourse for the delivery of his message, to the written form.

As a result of this change, we have the prophetical literature, which comprises more than one-half the contents of the Old Testament. When we examine this literature with a view to ascertaining its literary characteristics, we find that it is in form dramatic, that it is written in the form of dialogue, but with the names of the speakers omitted. Such an omission adds incalculably to the difficulty of understanding the prophetic books, for one is continually at a loss to identify the speaker in a given passage. Usually the chief speaker is Jehovah; sometimes it is the prophet himself who speaks *for* Jehovah, while the other parts of the dialogue are borne by the people. Often, however, the dialogue is rendered more complex by the introduction of other speakers. Now, these are the heathen; and again, they are merely disembodied voices who interrupt the speeches with lyric utterances expressing the feelings aroused by the preceding speech, in this way resembling the choruses in an oratorio. To realize what a serious obstacle to the understanding

## 34 OUR MODERN DEBT TO ISRAEL

of written prophecy is offered by the omission of the names of the speakers, one has but to consider how difficult it would be to read intelligently one of Shakespeare's plays under similar conditions — that is, with no suggestion as to who is speaking, and with no indentation of the lines to indicate a change of speaker. As an illustration we may glance at a few familiar lines from one of Shakespeare's best-known plays<sup>48</sup> printed, as the prophetic books are usually printed, in a way to give the minimum of help to the understanding.

“ Why doth the Jew pause? take thy forfeiture. Give me my principal and let me go. I have it ready for thee; here it is. He hath refused it in the open court: He shall have merely justice and his bond. A Daniel, still say I, a second Daniel! I thank thee, Jew, for teaching me that word. Shall I not barely have my principal? Thou shalt have nothing but the forfeiture, to be so taken at thy peril, Jew. Why, then the devil give him good of it! I'll stay no longer here in question.”

An example of the simplest form of prophetic dialogue is found in the sixty-third chapter of Isaiah — the vision of the divine Warrior from Edom. The speakers are the prophet and Jehovah, the two awed questions of the prophet being answered by the stately announcement of Him

<sup>48</sup> *The Merchant of Venice*, Act IV., Sc. I, 335-344.

who comes to judge the earth, and save His people.<sup>49</sup>

(THE PROPHET.)

Who is this that cometh from Edom,  
With crimson garments from Bozrah?  
This that is glorious in his apparel,  
Marching in the greatness of his strength?

(JEHOVAH.)

I that speak in righteousness,  
Mighty to save.

(THE PROPHET.)

Wherefore art thou red  
In thine apparel,  
And thy garments  
Like him that treadeth in the winefat?

(JEHOVAH.)

I have trodden the winepress alone;  
And of the peoples there was no man with me:  
Yea, I trod them in mine anger,  
And trampled them in my fury;  
And their lifeblood is sprinkled upon my garments,  
And I have stained all my raiment.  
For the day of vengeance was in my heart,  
And the year of my redeemed is come.  
And I looked, and there was none to help;  
And I wondered that there was none to uphold:

<sup>49</sup> The arrangement of the text is that of "*The Modern Reader's Bible*," edited by Professor R. G. Moulton.

## 36 OUR MODERN DEBT TO ISRAEL

Therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me;  
And my fury, it upheld me.

And I trod down the peoples in mine anger,  
And made them drunk in my fury,  
And I poured out their lifeblood on the earth.

A more elaborate example of the prophetic dialogue, and more difficult to understand as ordinarily printed, because in it occur the lyrical cries of disembodied voices, is found in the fortieth chapter of Isaiah.

(JEHOVAH.)

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people saith your God.  
Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem,  
And cry unto her,  
That her warfare is accomplished,  
That her iniquity is pardoned  
That she hath received of the Lord's hand  
double for all her sins.

(FIRST VOICE.)

Prepare ye in the wilderness the way of the Lord,  
Make straight in the desert a high way for  
our God.

Every valley shall be exalted,  
And every mountain and hill shall be made  
low:

And the crooked shall be made straight,  
And the rough places plain:  
And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,  
And all flesh shall see it together:  
For the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

(SECOND VOICE.)

Cry!

## (THIRD VOICE.)

What shall I cry?  
All flesh is grass,  
And all the goodness thereof is as the flower of  
the field:  
The grass withereth,  
The flower fadeth,  
Because the breath of the Lord bloweth upon  
it:  
Surely the people is grass!

## (FOURTH VOICE.)

The grass withereth,  
The flower fadeth:  
But the word of our God shall stand for ever.

## (FIFTH VOICE.)

O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion,  
Get thee up into the high mountain;  
O thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem,  
Lift up thy voice with strength;  
Lift it up, be not afraid;  
Say unto the cities of Judah, Behold, your  
God!

## (SIXTH VOICE.)

Behold the Lord God will come as a mighty one,  
And his arm shall rule for him:  
Behold, his reward is with him,  
And his recompence before him.  
He shall feed his flock like a shepherd,  
He shall gather the lambs in his arm,  
And carry them in his bosom,  
And shall gently lead them that give suck.

## 38 OUR MODERN DEBT TO ISRAEL

Sometimes the prophetic dialogue is further complicated and obscured by the introduction of description, or of narrated vision, designed to furnish a background or setting for the dialogue. An interesting illustration is furnished by the tenth chapter of Isaiah, where the message concerning Assyria is, without any explanation, interrupted by a narrated vision of the approach from the north of an invading army of Assyrians, and the consternation caused by its devastating march toward the holy city.

He is come to Aiath—  
He is passed through Migron—  
At Michmash he layeth up his baggage—  
They are gone over the pass—  
They have taken up their lodging at Geba—  
Ramah trembleth—  
Gibeah of Saul is fled.

Cry aloud with thy voice, O daughter of Gallim!  
Hearken, O Laishah!  
O thou poor Anathoth!  
Madmenah is a fugitive—  
The inhabitants of Gebim gather themselves to flee—  
This very day shall he halt at Nob—  
He shaketh his hand at the mount of the daughter of Zion, the hill of Jerusalem.

To the dramatic complexity of Hebrew prophecy English literature furnishes no very close analogy. Probably the nearest approach is Shelley's lyrical drama *Prometheus Unbound*. A

much closer analogy is furnished by the sacred oratorio, with its solos corresponding to the prophetic monologues, its duets and quartettes corresponding to the prophetic dialogues, and its crashing choruses corresponding to the dirges and triumph songs of prophecy.

Thus by stirring address, by the lyric utterance of impassioned poetry, now by symbolic acts, now by written tract or historical illustration, by whatever best means were at hand, the prophets sought to impress upon the half-awakened conscience of the nation,—upon careless monarchs and yet more careless people—the divinely inspired truths that glowed within their own enlightened souls. Sometimes they played the rôle of statesmen, fearlessly advocating the theory that Israel was a theocracy; sometimes they played the rôle of social reformers, pointing out the evils of the social system, luxury, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, and the oppression of the poor. As social reformers, they became the champions of the oppressed; and as such, they assailed most often those sins of commercial dishonesty which in modern times have been supposed to be particularly characteristic of the Jew, but from which Gentiles are not, it appears, wholly exempt. Always they stood forth as ethical and religious leaders.

Their ethical and religious teaching may be summarized in three fundamental propositions. Their most insistent emphasis was upon the na-

## 40 OUR MODERN DEBT TO ISRAEL

tion's obligation to be faithful to the covenant between Jehovah and Israel, whereby Jehovah had chosen Israel out of all the nations of the earth to be His people, and whereby they in return had elected to serve Him faithfully. Though this idea of the covenant was the most fundamental part of the prophetic teaching, the second was scarcely less important — namely, the purpose of the covenant, which was the building up of a kingdom of God on earth. Such a kingdom was to be the external expression of the covenant, for the end and aim of the covenant was, in the prophetic thought, the kingdom of God on earth founded, and though not yet realized, destined to be realized as a universal dominion through Israel. Closely allied to this thought of the hope of Israel as part of the larger hope for the world at large was the third of the prophetic ideals — the conservation of the Hebrew state, as the condition of realizing the hope of a kingdom of God on earth. The Israelitish state as it then existed seemed to them a sacred thing, because it was in their thought the kingdom of God already formed and destined to attain to a perfect purity of faith and morals, and to become the spiritual leader of the nations of the world. Ultimately, it is true, the prophets did come to realize that the kingdom of God might exist apart from any embodiment of it in the form of a political state, that, indeed, the destruction of the Jewish state might be the triumph of their God — the triumph

of righteousness over sin — and that, therefore, the religious ideals of Israel might survive their national overthrow. But it was not till after the Exile, when the scepter was seen to have departed forever from Judah, that such a complete spiritualization of the hope of Israel could occur.

It is in the union of aims at the same time so idealistic and so practical as those embodied in the three propositions just referred to, that the uniqueness of Israelitish prophecy consists. Other nations had their prophets; but a succession of men so absorbed in “the living God,” and at the same time so intensely practical in their aims, at once statesmen, reformers, and idealists, cannot be found in antiquity outside of Israel. In a very true sense it may be said that prophecy is one of the world’s debts to Israel, for, taken as a class, the Hebrew prophets have been without a parallel in human history in their work and influence.

The influence of the prophets upon modern thought has been simply incalculable. Lowell’s poetical assertion is entirely capable of proof.

Slowly the bible of the race is writ,  
And not on paper leaves, nor leaves of stone;  
Each age, each kindred adds to it,  
Texts of despair or hope, of joy or moan.  
While swings the sea, while mists the mountains  
shroud,  
While thunder’s surges burst on cliff’s of cloud,  
Still at the prophets’ feet the nations sit.

## 42 OUR MODERN DEBT TO ISRAEL

To each of the prophets the world owes the formulation of some essential truth which today forms a part of our common stock of ethical ideas. Of the prophets of the eighth century, the world owes to Amos the first adequate statement of the truth that God is a God of moral righteousness, and that He demands a moral righteousness in man to correspond with it. Amos first taught that justice and righteousness are the only realities in heaven and on earth. Jehovah's requirements are, in his view, few and simple: "Seek good and not evil. . . . Hate the evil and love the good, and establish judgement in the gate. . . . Let judgement roll down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream."<sup>50</sup> In stating these requirements Amos introduced the epoch-making teaching that God demanded justice between nation and nation, man and man, rather than sacred assemblies and offerings, that indeed the most elaborate worship is but an insult to God when offered by those who have no mind to conform their wills and conduct to His requirements. Such an elementary but eternal truth as this can never become superfluous nor obsolete. In Amos' recognition of the fact that God is a God of justice; and that religion — the moral relation of man to God — meant primarily righteousness, we have one of the most notable contributions ever offered to the ethical equipment of the race.

<sup>50</sup> Amos 5:14, 15, 24.

Not less notable was the contribution of Hosea, the second of "the writing prophets." Amos had revealed God as a God of righteousness; Hosea revealed Him as a God of mercy. We sing today,

There's a wideness in God's mercy like the wideness  
of the sea,  
And a kindness in His justice that is more than lib-  
erty.

and the idea seems trite enough; but when we stop to think that in the eighth century B. C. this thought was absolutely new, we must reckon him who first formulated it one of the greatest religious geniuses the world has ever seen. Not only is Hosea the earliest expositor of the truth that love is the highest attribute of God, but he is the first to set forth the equally important truth that God asks for an answering love from men, and that the lack of such love is the basis for Jehovah's severest censure. It is because "truth, loving-kindness, knowledge of God" are lacking that He has a controversy with the inhabitants of the land.<sup>51</sup> "Loving-kindness and not sacrifice" are what He desires, and "knowledge of God more than burnt offerings."<sup>52</sup> Righteousness and loving-kindness are to be sown and reaped by the people if they hope to secure and retain God's favor.<sup>53</sup> They must turn to God and "keep mercy

<sup>51</sup> Hos. 4:1.

<sup>53</sup> Hos. 10:12.

<sup>52</sup> Hos. 6:6.

## 44 OUR MODERN DEBT TO ISRAEL

and judgement, and wait on thy God continually.”<sup>54</sup> Thus, Hosea thinks of religion as an act of love. And in the utterance of these two ideas — that God is love, and that “he prayeth best who loveth best” — Hosea profoundly influenced both the thought of ancient Israel and that of the modern world. “It is not too much to say,” writes Cornill,<sup>55</sup> “that the entire faith and theology of later Israel grew out of Hosea, that all its characteristic views and ideas are to be first found in his book.” It is equally true that to him “the faith and theology” of the Gentile world owes an incalculable debt. One finds it everywhere. When Whittier sings,

Immortal Love, forever full,  
Forever flowing free,  
Forever shared, forever whole,  
A never-ebbing sea!

We bring no ghastly holocaust,  
We pile no graven stone;  
He serves thee best who loveth most  
His brothers and Thy own.

Thy litanies, sweet offices  
Of love and gratitude;  
Thy sacramental liturgies  
The joy of doing good.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Hos. 12:6.

<sup>55</sup> *Prophets of Israel*, p. 53.

<sup>56</sup> “Our Master,” ll. 1-4, and 137-145.

we recognize the "characteristic views and ideas" of the prophet who has not been inaptly called<sup>57</sup> "the Saint John of the Old Testament."

To Isaiah, also, the world owes some of its most valued intellectual possessions. It was Isaiah, the statesman, who first formulated a real philosophy of history. He was the first to see in human history, not a meaningless succession of unrelated events, but a gradually unfolding revelation of God's purposes for humanity. History is to Isaiah a drama, whose stage is the world, and all the men and women in it merely players. Its solemn scenes and acts present an articulated plan, a divine purpose which is being progressively realized in the providential government of the world.<sup>58</sup> Even in the stirring political changes of his own time, Isaiah saw the ordered progress of a drama whose *dénouement* should be a day of crisis and of final hope for humanity. And thus, in Isaiah's thought, Jehovah "reigns supreme alike in the realm of nature, and the sphere of human history; and the crash of kingdoms, the total dissolution of the old order of the Hebrew world, which accompanied the advance of Assyria, is to the prophet nothing else than the crowning proof of Jehovah's absolute dominion, asserting itself in the abasement of all that disputes His supremacy."<sup>59</sup> The failure of Israel's leaders to

<sup>57</sup> Fairweather, *The Pre-Exilic Prophets*, p. 47.

<sup>58</sup> See Is. 5:12; 10:12, 23; 14:24, 26 ff; 28:21 ff.

<sup>59</sup> Robertson Smith, *Prophets*, p. 226.

## 46 OUR MODERN DEBT TO ISRAEL

see human history as the working out of a divine plan is the cause of severe denunciation.<sup>60</sup> Moreover, his own recognition of it is the source of the sublime confidence, which has been remarked<sup>61</sup> as one of his most pronounced characteristics. "What supernatural confidence is necessary," says Orelli, "in the very age when God's true servants were compelled to announce ruthless judgment on the temple, and it seemed as if . . . God's kingdom in Israel was a beautiful dream lacking confirmation, to promise such a position in the world to this very temple!" No wonder that, with such discernment, Isaiah has been called the "prophet of faith."

He might also justly be called the "prophet of reverence," for in his emphasis upon reverence as a fundamental element in religion, Isaiah made an important contribution to the world's stock of theological ideas. His ideal of true religion is distinctly stated in the words, "Jehovah of hosts, Him shall ye sanctify, and let Him be your dread."<sup>62</sup> Isaiah believed, as Dante and Spenser afterwards believed, that the first of mortal sins was pride. His statement implies, therefore, that the prime necessity for Godly living is the negation of pride. Man's proper attitude is one of humility before Him who alone is exalted.<sup>63</sup> It implies,

<sup>60</sup> E. g. Is. 22:11.

<sup>61</sup> Orelli, *Old Testament Prophecy*, p. 258.

<sup>62</sup> Is. 8:13, cf. 29:13.

<sup>63</sup> Is. 2:11.

also, implicit trust and submission to His will, for Isaiah makes humble faith the basis, not only of political, but of religious life as well. For some thirty centuries men have been testing the truth of the prophet's declaration. Now it seems a truism when we read in Tennyson's poetry,

Kind hearts are more than coronets,  
And simple faith than Norman blood.

But we must not forget that these spiritual discoveries, which are as familiar to us now as the principle of gravitation, were once newly discovered by men who deserve, therefore, not less, but more gratitude from us than does he who revealed for the first time some natural law.

It was reserved for a humbler prophet than Isaiah, however, to utter what was undoubtedly the noblest affirmation of Hebrew prophecy. This is found in Micah's reply to the eager question of the penitent people who ask whether it will suffice for them to offer their first born in sacrifice for their transgressions, "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God."<sup>64</sup> Here we have combined the essential teachings of all the prophets who had gone before. Amos had laid stress upon the necessity of righteousness, and Micah exhorts men to "do justly." Hosea had

<sup>64</sup> Micah 6:8.

## 48 OUR MODERN DEBT TO ISRAEL

preached the necessity of love; and here Micah insists upon loving-kindness as one of the three fundamentals of religion. Isaiah had emphasized the need of humble faith; and Micah demands a lowly walk with God as a primary religious virtue. Thus, Micah embodies the great ethical ideas which his predecessors had stated, combining justice, love and humble faith in one great categorical imperative. The requirements of true religion never were better stated. Israel's teachers of a later day could do little more than reiterate what Micah had already said. "True religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this," said the apostle James,<sup>65</sup> "to visit the fatherless and the widow in their affliction, and keep himself unspotted from the world." Nor has any one in all the Christian centuries been able to formulate a better statement. Justice between man and man, charity, and humble-hearted faith are still the sum total of God's requirements.

To the prophets of the seventh century, also, the debt of the modern world is very great. To the prophet Zephaniah it owes the first complete and adequate statement of the relation of national sin and retribution. He it was who saw clearly that moral forces must be reckoned with in the world's administration, that national wrong-doing will be followed by national punishment as inevitably as the night follows the day, because such a sequence is part of the moral order of the world.

<sup>65</sup> James 1:27.

This punishment he foresees as “Jehovah’s day,” the triumph of righteousness over sin. In language of somber vigor he pictures this day of vengeance:

The great Day of the Lord is near:  
It is near and hasteth greatly!  
Even the voice of the Day of the Lord;  
The mighty man crieth there bitterly!

That Day is a day of wrath,  
A day of trouble and distress,  
A day of wasteness and desolation,  
A day of darkness and gloominess,  
  
A day of clouds and thick darkness,  
A day of the trumpet and alarm  
Against the fenced cities,  
And against the high battlements!

And I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the Lord: and their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as dung. Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord’s wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy: for he shall make an end, yea, a terrible end, of all them that dwell in the land.”<sup>66</sup>

As illustrative of the extent of Zephaniah’s influence upon the thought of Christendom, it may be sufficient to remind ourselves that the passage

<sup>66</sup> Zeph. 1:14-18.

## 50 OUR MODERN DEBT TO ISRAEL

just quoted has inspired the most stately of the hymns of the Christian church. The *Dies irae* of Thomas of Celano, a Franciscan monk of the thirteenth century, is little more than a paraphrase and expansion of the Vulgate translation of Zephaniah's "doom song."

The message of Zephaniah was reiterated and re-emphasized by his contemporary Nahum. The latter's "taunt song" over doomed Assyria, weakened by the Scythian invasions, and soon to fall before the rising power of the Persians and the Medes, is not a mere diatribe against a hostile nation, nor is it "only an exultant cry of vengeance from the cruelly oppressed."<sup>67</sup> Nahum had a great truth to proclaim, the eternal principle that they who do not rule in righteousness shall perish from the earth, that the world's kingdoms built on the foundation of force and fraud are destined to certain destruction. Nahum saw the truth that tyranny is suicide. It is a truth that the nations have been slow to learn, which, indeed, the great empires of antiquity never learned, which Spain learned only after the disintegration of that once powerful empire, and which Christian America has learned only through the discipline of a most bitter experience. Only through the suffering of the civil war did America come to realize that the penalty of tyranny is appalling and inevitable. It was Lincoln, the

<sup>67</sup> Fowler, *The Prophets*, p. 53.

great interpreter of the democratic spirit, who said:<sup>68</sup>

“ Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman’s two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn by the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said that the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.” Certainly no judgment of the Lord is truer or more righteous than this which Nahum enunciated in the seventh century B. C.

No less timely, and no less influential in molding the thought of a later age, was the truth set forth by Habakkuk. Looking from his prophetic watch-tower upon the nations surrounding Israel, and seeing nothing but the tyranny of the strong oppressing the weak, the Chaldeans even more insolent and overbearing than the Assyrians whom they had overthrown, his faith in the moral government of the world seems partially to fail, and he cries out,<sup>69</sup> “Thou that art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and that canst not look on perverseness, wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy peace when the

<sup>68</sup> *The Second Inaugural Address.*

<sup>69</sup> Hab. 1:13.

## 52 OUR MODERN DEBT TO ISRAEL

wicked swalloweth up the man that is more righteous than he; and makest men as the fishes of the sea, as the creeping things, that have no ruler over them? He taketh up all of them with the angle, he catcheth them in his net, and gathereth them in his drag: therefore he rejoiceth and is glad.” Jehovah’s answer given in the following section of the dialogue<sup>70</sup> is this, “Behold his soul is puffed up, it is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.” The meaning is that the Chaldean “flown with insolence and wine” is doomed by his very arrogance to a speedy overthrow according to the ancient law that pride is the forerunner of destruction; whereas the righteous shall survive by his endurance, his fidelity, his stedfast integrity. It was a message that Israel took to heart. Through centuries of suffering the oppressor’s wrong, and the spurns that patient merit of the unworthy takes, Israel has stood firm, living by his faith. Endurance has been for three thousand years the most obvious, and by no means the least admirable trait of the Hebrew race. And it is a quality worthy of emulation. It is the quality that Saint Paul selects<sup>71</sup> as the motto of Christianity. “The just,” he says, “shall live by faith.”<sup>72</sup>

The most voluminous writer of the prophets of

<sup>70</sup> Hab. 2:2, 3.

<sup>71</sup> Heb. 10:38.

<sup>72</sup> The word used is the nearest Greek equivalent of the Hebrew word found in Habakkuk.

the seventh century was Jeremiah, and his message was in importance and influence quite worthy of the space the prophecy occupies in the Old Testament literature. The message was the product of a personal struggle. No prophet was in his generation more unpopular. Tradition says he was finally stoned by his own people. Be that as it may, his whole life was a martyrdom of unsuccessful struggle against fearful odds. The false prophets of his time bitterly resented his arraignment of them.<sup>73</sup> The priests, also, hated him, for his ridicule of the doctrine of the inviolability of Mount Zion, which had been formulated by Isaiah in the preceding century, and had afterwards become a dogma.<sup>74</sup> They detested him still more for his fearless denunciation of their pretensions.<sup>75</sup> The sages execrated him because of his contempt for their vaunted wisdom.<sup>76</sup> The princes of the royal house vilified and slandered him to the king, demanding his execution.<sup>77</sup> His fellow citizens of Anathoth planned his assassination.<sup>78</sup> King Jehoiakim heaped insults upon him by burning his writings,<sup>79</sup> and would have imprisoned him, had he been able to apprehend him. His successor, Zedekiah, at the suggestion of the nobles, did actually authorize his imprisonment.<sup>80</sup> Thus, the common people

<sup>73</sup> Jer. 23:9 ff, and chap. 28.

<sup>77</sup> Jer. 38:4.

<sup>74</sup> Jer. 7:4.

<sup>78</sup> Jer. 11:21, 22.

<sup>75</sup> Jer. 8:8.

<sup>79</sup> Jer. 36:23.

<sup>76</sup> Jer. 8:9.

<sup>80</sup> Jer. 38:4, 5.

## 54 OUR MODERN DEBT TO ISRAEL

and the political and intellectual leaders of the nation seem to have ignored their differences in their common hatred of this man who brought them such an amazing and unwelcome message of impending ruin.<sup>81</sup>

It is little to be wondered at that Jeremiah, tired of the struggle, should have longed to escape.<sup>82</sup> Like Job, he looked upon his life as a long servitude; and, like him, he cursed the day of his birth.<sup>83</sup> He seemed to himself to have failed in his mission, and doubted the genuineness of his call to undertake it.<sup>84</sup> Yet out of his sense of failure, and out of his sense of isolation from his people, grew a keener realization than any prophet hitherto had felt of the truth that religion, or a right relationship between man and God, was an individual, and not a national, matter. Such a discovery could not have come even to him, had not the indifference of careless monarchs and a careless people forced upon him the conviction that the realization of the religious ideals of Israel could be hoped for no longer in the corporate life of the nation, but only in the life of the individual. It is this hope which alone saves him from despair. Like Amos,<sup>85</sup> a century earlier, he too looks forward to a happy future for Israel; but the two prophets conceive of this future in different ways. Amos speaks of it as a

<sup>81</sup> See, for example, Jer. 8:1-3.

<sup>84</sup> Jer. 20:7.

<sup>82</sup> Jer. 9:2.

<sup>85</sup> Amos 9:15.

<sup>83</sup> Jer. 20:14 ff.

time when Israel shall be restored to God's favor, and to national integrity and prosperity. Jeremiah, on the other hand, while he predicts that Jehovah will turn again the captivity of Jacob's tents,<sup>86</sup> does not anticipate a renewal of the old covenant relations between Jehovah and Israel. Instead, there will be a new covenant between God and the individual souls of His people. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers . . . But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."<sup>87</sup> Scorn and shame and persecution were the portion of this martyr-prophet in his life: yet out of his suffering grew a new conception of religion as a covenant between God and the individual soul, which is today the most treasured possession alike of Jew and Gentile.<sup>88</sup>

Between the prophets of the seventh century and those that remain to be considered, there intervenes the deep and wide cleavage of the Exile, with the momentous changes which that period produced in Jewish life and thought. As a result

<sup>86</sup> Jer. 30:18.

<sup>87</sup> Jer. 31:31-33.

<sup>88</sup> See, also, Kirkpatrick, *The Doctrine of the Prophets*, pp. 324, 325.

## 56 OUR MODERN DEBT TO ISRAEL

of these changes, the prophets of the Exile and the restoration faced conditions and problems totally different from those of their predecessors. During the generation that they lived in captivity, the Jews, with that marvelous power of adapting themselves to their surroundings which has always been a characteristic of the race, became, instead of an agricultural, a commercial people. There is no question that the absorbing interest of the modern Jews in trade, and particularly in finance, is not a fundamental characteristic of the race; but that it is an acquired characteristic, and that it is due to the influence of the Exile. How strong that influence was is attested by the fact that through all the changes and chances of their subsequent history the Jewish race has retained its interest in commerce and finance.

Perhaps it is not unreasonable to date the fondness of the Jewish race for statecraft, also, from the apprenticeship they served in Chaldea. There at least some of them developed administrative and diplomatic skill of no mean order. Some of them, like Joseph in Egypt, rose to positions of trust and responsibility in Babylon. Daniel, if we are to credit the narrative portions of the book that bears his name as being wholly historical, occupied high administrative positions successively under Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar (Narbonidus?), and Darius, the Mede. Zerubbabel was appointed by Cyrus as the leader of the first colonists who returned to Judea, and as

governor of the colony, Ezra, "a ready scribe of the law," appears, also, to have been high in favor at the Persian court. Artaxerxes Longimanus gave him letters and money, and every encouragement in his work of collecting and leading a second body of returning exiles home. Nehemiah was cup-bearer to Artaxerxes Longimanus; and about 444 B. C. was commissioned by the latter as governor of Judea.

To the great majority of the exiles, however, there came no advancement. They lived as best they could in poverty, and sometimes in persecution. The latter was most violent toward the close of the exile, when the menacing power of Cyrus caused a furious outbreak of fanaticism among the Babylonians, who attributed his successes to the anger of their gods. At once they sought to prove their religious zeal by a vigorous persecution of the strangers within their gates. Many of the Jews were killed and all suffered from the obloquy which is always the lot of an alien and subject people when exposed to the fanatical hatred of a stronger and dominant race.<sup>89</sup> A natural result was the development in the Jews of a marked degree of racial narrowness and intolerance.

Even more significant than these changes, however, were those effected by the Exile in the emo-

<sup>89</sup> Some inkling of the suffering of this period may be gathered from the song of exiled patriotism (Psalm 137) which probably belongs to the latter part of the Exile.

## 58 OUR MODERN DEBT TO ISRAEL

tional and intellectual life of the Jewish race. The interest in education, so marked a characteristic of modern Judaism, dates from the Exile, and is due to the intellectual stimulus afforded by contact with Babylonian culture. Not less far-reaching was the effect of the compulsory separation of the race during the Exile from the realities of civic life. The result was an amazing development of what may be called religious imagination. The exiles were inspired by great hopes for the future; but these hopes were not limited by the necessities of a historical situation in which they should be realized. Consequently their conceptions of the future in store for Israel, and their descriptions of the processes by which that future was to be reached became colossal, ornate, and lavishly symbolic. The tendency to the use of symbolism was, no doubt, quickened by the rich imagery of Babylonian art by which during the Exile they were surrounded. At all events, Jewish literature became, to a degree unthought of hitherto, apocalyptic. The leaders of Israelitish thought came to represent God's rule of the world, and His providential care of His people, not by the ordinary political and military processes of history, but by awful convulsions and catastrophes both in nature and in polities, in which God Himself appeared, or executed His will through superhuman agencies.

One of the strangest effects of the Exile was the development of ritual. One would suppose

that the destruction of the temple and the necessary discontinuance of the sacrifices would have opened the mind of Israel to more spiritual conceptions of God as of one who dwelt not in temples made with hands, and who was best pleased with the sacrifices of a broken spirit.<sup>90</sup> As a matter of fact their thoughts continually turned to the "holy city" and the ruined temple.<sup>91</sup> The sacrifices were, they believed, only intermittent, not forever abolished. Their constant prayer was,

Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion:  
Build thou the walls of Jerusalem.  
Then shalt thou delight in the sacrifices of righteousness,  
In burnt offering and whole burnt offering:  
Then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar.<sup>92</sup>

The temporary discontinuance of the temple service seemed to them to afford a chance for the reconstruction of the temple ritual on a much more elaborate and detailed system. Moreover, such a reconstruction seemed imperatively needed to make the ritual express the stronger sense of guilt which the punishment of the Exile impressed upon the mind of Israel.

Closely related to the expansion of the ritual was the growing importance of the priesthood, consequent upon the fall of the monarchy and the subsequent absence of civic life. How im-

<sup>90</sup> Ps. 51:17.

<sup>91</sup> Ps. 137.

<sup>92</sup> Ps. 51:18, 19.

## 60 OUR MODERN DEBT TO ISRAEL

portant the priesthood became in post-Exilic times may be inferred from the number of priests (4289) who returned to Jerusalem with the first colonists — a very large proportion when we consider that the whole number of free men under the leadership of Zerubbabel and Joshua was only forty-two thousand, three hundred and sixty. Nor did the importance of the priesthood diminish. Josephus in his account of the service in Herod's temple, says there were twenty thousand priests, who were divided into twenty four courses, each "course" being responsible for the daily sacrifice for one week. During the continuance of the Jewish national life, up to the final destruction of the temple in 70 A. D., the priesthood retained its dominant place of power and influence in politics and religion.

Only by considering the conditions affecting the development of the priesthood during the Exile, can we account for the changes that prophecy underwent. Prophecy with Amos had begun a war against all ritual, saying, "I hate, I despise your fasts; I will not smell in your solemn assemblies" ; and with Jeremiah had achieved a religion independent of all priesthood and temple. After the Exile, prophecy reappears, but in a totally different attitude toward ritual. Ezekiel legislates gravely that at the new moon the sacrifice shall be one bullock, six lambs, one ram, two ephahs of flour, and two hins of oil; and Zechariah, while he proclaims the Messianic

king and high priest to be the great feeders of the national life and worship, finds no place beside them for the prophet.

No less significant than the changed attitude toward ritual and the priesthood was the changed conception of Jehovah and of His relation to the race. Early Israel had thought of their God as simply the God of Palestine and its inhabitants. He was purely a local divinity. The pre-Exilic prophets had, it is true, taught more spiritualized ideas of God, affirming that He was not the God of Israel alone, but of all the families of the earth. It was not till the Exile, however, that we find the complete spiritualization of the idea. To the Exiles He became the one God, omnipotent, and transcending all space relations. They, not Herbert Spencer, are responsible for the idea of "the immanence of God." Only in Exilic, or post-Exilic times could have been written the lines of Psalm 139, beginning,

Whither shall I go from thy spirit?  
Or whither shall I flee from thy presence?  
If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there:  
If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, thou art there.  
If I take the wings of the morning,  
And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;  
Even there shall thy hand lead me,  
And thy right hand shall hold me.  
If I say, Surely the darkness shall overwhelm me,  
And the light about me shall be night;  
Even the darkness hideth not from thee,

## 62 OUR MODERN DEBT TO ISRAEL

But the night shineth as the day:  
The darkness and the light are both alike to thee.

for not till then did the Hebrews conceive of a deity in whom, to borrow the expression of a Jew of a later age, “we live and move and have our being.”

Such an exalted conception of deity encouraged a tendency, already nascent, to think of the necessity of mediators between God and His people. Hence came about the prominence given to angels, regarded as God’s agents. From the earliest times the Hebrews had thought of Jehovah as surrounded by a court of ministers whose duty it was to celebrate His glory, and to execute His will. They were called male’akim, or messengers, a word which the Greeks translated *ἄγγελοι*, whence our English word angels. In primitive Hebrew religion these messengers had been required by the fact that God’s residence was thought of as confined to one place, namely Mount Zion. In later Jewish thought they were required rather by the worshiper’s unwillingness to conceive of Jehovah’s personal appearance in missions of a menial nature. Ezekiel, for example, because he is unable to think of God as humbling Himself to explain the details of the new temple, represents Him as making use of intermediaries. With the post-Exilic prophets this is carried much further. Whereas the former prophets, Amos, Isaiah, and Jeremiah, had themselves directly interceded with God for the people, Zechariah describes the “in-

terpreting angel" as interceding, and as receiving the divine comfort.<sup>93</sup> In Zechariah's prophecy we find for the first time in Jewish literature orders and ranks of angels. Here, also, we see the beginnings of the identification of special angels with different peoples, as of Michael with Israel.<sup>94</sup>

Such, then, were some of the effects of the increase of those conceptions of God's sublimity and awfulness, which were destined in the later thought of Israel to lift Him to so great a distance above men; and to create so numerous a host of intermediaries, both priestly and angelic, between the worshipper and his God.

Speaking more in detail of the contributions of the Exilic and the post-Exilic prophets to our ethical equipment, we may note that in Ezekiel we find the first statement of the idea that God's dwelling place is not exclusively in the temple at Jerusalem, but that where His worshippers are, there is He to be found. In the vision that the prophet saw by the Chebar canal, we are told, in gorgeous imagery that has supplied Milton with the material for his account of the Messiah in

<sup>93</sup> Zech. 1:12. See also Zech. 3:1 ff and 2:1 ff. In the latter passage the interpreting angel does not communicate directly with Deity, but receives His word from another angel who has come forth from the immediate presence of Jehovah. Later, there came to be recognized five ranks or orders of angels — the "thrones, dominations, princedoms, virtues, powers," of Milton. *Paradise Lost* V. 772.

<sup>94</sup> See Dan. 10:13, 21; 12:1; Jude 9; Rev. 12:7.

## 64 OUR MODERN DEBT TO ISRAEL

his chariot of wrath,<sup>95</sup> how Jehovah left the temple at Jerusalem to take up his abode among the exiles in Chaldea.<sup>96</sup>

The beautiful statement in the Prayer-book, “where two or three are gathered together in Thy name there art Thou in the midst of them,” goes back to its ultimate source to Ezekiel, and is first found in his book. Though Jehovah still remained in Hebrew thought a personal, and therefore not an omnipresent, God, this idea of His not being limited to one place marks a great advance in Israelitish thought, and as such prepares the way for the fuller expression found in the book of Jonah of the thought of a God from whose “face,” or presence, it is not possible to flee.

Another contribution of Ezekiel to the world’s religious possessions was closely connected with the work of his predecessor, Jeremiah. The latter, it will be remembered, had emancipated Hebrew religion from the persistent notion that it was the nation and not the individual with whom Jehovah had primarily to do. The sense of individual responsibility in matters of religion first found expression in Jeremiah, who taught that a man must stand or fall on his own merits. But beyond this Jeremiah had not gone. It remained for Ezekiel to develop the idea of religious fellowship by educating his compatriots

<sup>95</sup> *Paradise Lost*, Book VI.

<sup>96</sup> Ezekiel 10:1; 11:16.

not only to live religiously as individuals, but to live as religious individuals in a theocracy.

Ezekiel's plan of a holy state is interesting partly for its own sake; partly because of the comparison that it inevitably suggests with other and later utopias. It was undoubtedly the first of its kind, antedating Plato's by nearly two centuries.<sup>97</sup> Yet the fact of its precedence has been persistently ignored. To call Plato's work the first ideal commonwealth has become one of the commonplaces of literary criticism. Richard Garnett, for example, in his introduction to the "Everyman" edition of the *Republic*,<sup>98</sup> says of it, "It was probably the first in which full expression was given to the longing which must of necessity arise in the human heart when the cosmos and the individual appear at odds, so tersely expressed in Fitzgerald's Omar Khayyam:

Ah Love! could you and I with Fate conspire  
To grasp this sorry Scheme of Things entire,  
Would we not shatter it to bits — and then  
Re-mould it nearer to the Heart's Desire?

<sup>97</sup> The exact date of the *Republic* is uncertain. The old belief that Aristophanes ridicules its ideas (community of goods and of women) in the *Ecclesiazusae* (393 B. C.), and that it was, therefore, known so early, is now generally discredited. Ezekiel's holy state is described in the last eight chapters of his book. These chapters belong to the second period of the prophet's ministry; that is, they were written some time within the period which opened six months after the fall of Jerusalem (Jan., 585 B. C.) and 570 B. C.

<sup>98</sup> *The Republic of Plato in Ten Books translated from the Greek by H. Spens, D. D.*, Introduc. p. XII.

## 66 OUR MODERN DEBT TO ISRAEL

In making this assertion, Richard Garnett simply echoes what has often been claimed. In a German work upon the ideal commonwealths,<sup>99</sup> we find the author writing at the very beginning of the chapter on Plato's *Republic*, "Auf hier, wenn wir die Staatsgebilde der Phantasie betrachten, muss sich das Blick zuerst auf Hellas richten."

An error equally prevalent is that of regarding Plato's *Republic* as the inspiration of every ideal commonwealth planned since that time. That the literary influence of Plato has been very great, there can, of course, be no question. Few books have been so influential. Almost, if not every vision of "a world unrealized" written since has owed more or less to that philosopher with the soul of a poet, who, as from some tower of speculation, looked into the future, and saw the vision of the world, and "all the wonder that would be." He it was who suggested such treatises as St. Augustine's *De Civitate Dei*, and More's *Utopia*; and, through the latter, Campanella's *Civitas Solis*, Bacon's *New Atlantis*, Harrington's *Oceana*, Hobbes's *Leviathan*, Sir John Eliot's *Monarchy of Man*, Hall's *Mundus Alter et Idem*, Filmer's *Patriarcha*, Butler's *Erewhon*, and Bellamy's *Looking Backward*.<sup>100</sup> Moreover, this list is

<sup>99</sup> The German work referred to is the *Schlaraaffia Politica*, published anonymously at Leipsie in 1892. The quotation is from page 7.

<sup>100</sup> Besides the speculative treatises mentioned above, we find another large group obviously inspired by the same original, but less speculative, and more playful in tone. To

being continually supplemented by additions from the pens of men dissatisfied with things as they are, and dreaming of things as they think they ought to be.

Yet, influential as Plato's *Republic* has been upon literature, its effect upon the thought of the modern world is negligible in comparison to that exerted by Ezekiel's holy state, for the latter is the source of those ideals of Christendom associated with the phrase "the kingdom of God."<sup>101</sup> There can be no question that it is to him that the world owes the first detailed plan of a theocracy — the design of a state in which God is the supreme ruler exercising his authority through the priests or ministers. It is an ideal that has appeared repeatedly in human history — in the rule of the Popes in the Middle Ages, the latter class belong Barclay's *Argenis*, Bishop Francis Goodwin's *Man in the Moon*, Bishop John Wilkin's *Discovery of a World in the Moon*, Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, Paltcock's *Peter Wilkins*, and Lytton's *Coming Race*. A fairly complete bibliography may be found in the *Nova Solyma*, edited by Rev Walter Bagley, Lond., 1902, Vol. II, pp. 361 ff. Probably the most complete discussion of the whole subject is to be found in the *Geschichte des Antiken Kommunismus und Sozialismus*, by Dr. Robert Pöhlman, professor of ancient history in the University of Erlangen, two volumes, Munich, 1901. Many of the more playful utopias are included in *Voyages Imaginaires, Songes, Visions, et Romans Cabalistiques*, 37 volumes, Paris, 1787.

<sup>101</sup> See Cheyne, *Jewish Religious Life after the Exile*, pp. 80 ff; Montefiore, *The Religion of the Ancient Hebrews* (Hibbert Lectures, 1892), pp. 321 ff; Skinner, "Ezekiel" (*Expositor's Bible*); Cornill, *The Prophets of Israel*, p. 123; Kraetzschar, *Hand-Kommentar zum Alten Testament*.

and in the Puritan sects of the seventeenth century, like the Fifth Monarchy Men of the period of the Commonwealth in England. Indeed the Puritan Commonwealth itself was in part an attempt to realize the ancient hope of Israel of a kingdom of the saints, a kingdom of God on earth. Such attempts have invariably failed, as the Puritan kingdom of the saints failed when the return of the Stuarts caused it to pass like a dream away, and as such schemes must always fail so long as human nature is what it is. For the realization of Ezekiel's dream there is required such a citizenship as he assumed of men on whom God has bestowed a new heart and a new mind, who sin only unawares, and on whom, therefore, no punishment save an ecclesiastical penance need ever be imposed.

Though, of course, there is no connection between Plato's *Republic* and Ezekiel's holy state, there is, broadly speaking, a remarkable resemblance between them. Though it is to Ezekiel and not to Plato that the world owes the long deferred hope of a kingdom of God on earth, such a hope was not peculiar to Ezekiel, but was Plato's also. His city of the perfect is, like Ezekiel's, a *civitas dei*. It is a celestial commonwealth, a *παράστημα ἐν ὀυρανῷ*<sup>102</sup>, he calls it, a likeness of a celestial city. And the object of its corporate life is to furnish to every citizen the maximum of opportunity to grow God-like.

<sup>102</sup> *Rep.* 592.

To Plato, the crowning glory of human life, the process by which our mortal nature puts on immortality, is by becoming like to God, *ὅμοιωσις τῷ Θεῷ*. And such an ideal in its political application means the establishment of a kingdom of God on earth — a kingdom wherein dwelleth righteousness, *ἐν οἷς δικαιοσύνη κατοικεῖ*.<sup>103</sup>

It is this transcendentalism, common to Ezekiel and Plato, this faculty of making us

. . . breathe in worlds  
To which the heaven of heavens is but a veil,

that is responsible for a further resemblance between the two commonwealths. Both are ideal pictures, impossible of realization, and were so regarded by their authors. In this respect they differ from most of the later Utopias. It is significant that most authors of Utopias, such as More, Bacon, and Campanella, represent their ideal commonwealths as already existing, and needing only to be described, whereas both Ezekiel and Plato present their conception of a perfect state as existent only in thought. Each is content to remain wholly an idealist; neither makes the slightest claim to be a practical politician. Ezekiel's vision of a restored and happy Israel has been called "a sort of Messianic apocalypse,

<sup>103</sup> By "justice" Plato really means righteousness. It is not a pale abstraction, but the root and source of all virtue — the condition and the means of growing like to God. See Nettleship, *Lectures and Remains*, Vol. II, p. 221, and Adam, *The Vitality of Platonism*, pp. 66-67.

## 70 OUR MODERN DEBT TO ISRAEL

an ideal picture of what ought to come to pass, intended to suggest broad lines of progress rather than to indicate exact details.”<sup>104</sup> Professor Cornill has pointed out<sup>105</sup> that Ezekiel’s plan of a theocracy was entirely impracticable, in other words, was possible only when the Jews were a conquered and subject people, governed by a foreign power. Ezekiel tells us<sup>106</sup> that he saw the plan of the holy city “in the visions of God,” and Plato,<sup>107</sup> also, speaks of his city of the perfect as one that exists in idea only, “for I do not think,” he adds, “that there is such an one anywhere on earth. In heaven . . . there is laid up a pattern of such a city; and he who desires may behold this, and beholding, may govern himself accordingly. But whether there really is, or ever will be such an one is of no importance to him; for he will act according to the laws of that city and of no other.” “Nothing actually existing in this world,” says Professor Jowitt in his Introduction to *The Dialogues*, “at all resembles Plato’s ideal state, nor does he himself imagine that such a state is possible.” When asked how the ideal could be realized, he replied ironically,<sup>108</sup> “When one son of a king becomes a philosopher,” referring to his famous paradox in the *Republic*, “until kings are philosophers, or philosophers are kings, cities will

<sup>104</sup> Sanders and Kent, *Messages of Later Prophecy*, p. 114.

<sup>105</sup> *Prophets of Israel*, pp. 123-124.

<sup>106</sup> Chap. 40:2.

<sup>107</sup> *Rep.* 591.

<sup>108</sup> *Laws*, Bk. V.

never cease from ill.”<sup>109</sup> Yet to think of the *Republic* as a mere exercise of fancy without any practical purpose, is wholly to misunderstand Plato and his work. . . . Plato, no less than Ezekiel, was trying to “suggest broad lines of progress,” even though he did not expect that his own generation would travel very far along the road he had pointed out. Asked whether there is any way of making citizens believe in a certain theory, he answered, “Not in the present generation; I do not see any way of accomplishing this; but their sons may be made to believe, and their sons’ sons, and posterity after them.”<sup>110</sup>

In their theoretical construction of a perfect state of society, and in their attempt to formulate the governing principles that ought to be regnant in that society, both Ezekiel and Plato wholly ignored existing conditions.<sup>111</sup> Both presupposed a change in the spirit and temper of the citizens who are to form the body politic. Ezekiel assumes that the members of the holy state will, at its beginnings, be people upon whom God has bestowed a new heart and a new mind, so that they will walk in the way of His commandments, and observe His laws. Though he does not assume that they have attained perfection, he does presuppose

<sup>109</sup> *Rep.* 501.

<sup>110</sup> *Rep.* 415.

<sup>111</sup> There is a striking difference in this respect between Plato and Aristotle, whose *Politics* is a practical discussion of the best form of government possible under existing conditions.

## 72 OUR MODERN DEBT TO ISRAEL

a citizenship of forgiven and sanctified souls, who err, if at all, only inadvertently. There is no mistaking his meaning: “For I will take you from among the nations, and gather you out of all the countries, and will bring you into your own land. And I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your filthiness; and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep mine ordinances, and do them.”<sup>112</sup> This purified citizenship was to be the spiritual charge, not of a king, for the function of the king was to disappear with the removal of war, and of the need of a supreme judge, but of a high-priest and his subordinate ministers. These were to constitute a priestly caste<sup>113</sup> whose divinely sanctioned office no earthly king could take away. For the preservation of their ritual purity, Ezekiel provides most carefully. They are to wear no woolen garment; they must not approach a corpse, unless it be that of parent, child, brother, or unmarried sister. On passing from the inner to the outer courts of the Temple, they are to lay aside their garments “that they sanctify not the people with their garments,” in other words lest they mingle the sacred and the profane.

Plato, also, assumes that the citizens of the perfect state are to be, in Descartes’ famous phrase,

<sup>112</sup> Ezek. 36:25-29.

<sup>113</sup> See W. E. Addis, *Hebrew Religion*, p. 230 ff.

“on the side of the angels.” Though they are not thought of as having yet attained even to the measurable sanctification assumed by Ezekiel as preliminary to the inauguration of his holy state, Plato does represent them as in a process of becoming lovers of justice under the leadership of philosophers who have themselves passed through a rigorous course of self-discipline. Plato pins his faith to the best instincts of an ethical aristocracy, just as Ezekiel had pinned his to the best instincts of an ecclesiastical aristocracy. Each believed in the collective sense of the most cultivated, most delicately perceptive, most spiritually-minded people in the state. The fact that in Ezekiel’s thought such a “remnant” meant a priestly aristocracy of morally educated men, and that in Plato’s thought<sup>114</sup> it meant an aristocracy composed of men educated physically, mentally, and morally, is due merely to a difference of racial ideals.

But the idealism common to Ezekiel and Plato shows itself, not alone in their evident belief in the perfectibility of human nature, but is even more apparent in their formulation of the principles that are to govern the new society.

The laws governing the holy state, as they are given in the last nine chapters of Ezekiel, are wholly ritual, and concern (a) the temple,<sup>115</sup> (b) the priests,<sup>116</sup> (c) the sacrifice,<sup>117</sup> (d)

<sup>114</sup> *Rep.* 537-540.

<sup>115</sup> *Ezek.* 45:1-8.

<sup>116</sup> *Ezek.* 44:4-16.

<sup>117</sup> *Ezek.* 42:13; 43:13-27; 44:24, 27; 45:17-46:11.

## 74 OUR MODERN DEBT TO ISRAEL

times and seasons, the Sabbath, the new moons, and the three feasts.<sup>118</sup> This very meager equipment of legislation was not, however, to be the only code possessed by the holy state. Although Ezekiel provides no code of laws for the guidance of the civil life of the community,<sup>119</sup> because, obviously, with such a citizenship as he presupposes, none was needed, he evidently does assume that the regulations he gives will be supplemented by those embodied in the "holiness code" of Leviticus.<sup>120</sup> Again and again, as when he prescribes the laws that are to govern the life of the priests in the holy state, he expresses himself in terms so nearly identical with those of the "holiness code" as to prove that he not only was familiar with it, but that he regarded it as an authoritative basis of moral and religious life.<sup>121</sup>

Plato's scheme, though less ecclesiastical than Ezekiel's, is no less moral. Baron Bunsen is said to have remarked that the *Republic* is not so much

<sup>118</sup> Ezek. 44:24; 45:17-46:11.

<sup>119</sup> No law, in the modern sense of a body of enacted rules, recognized by a community as binding, existed in ancient Israel. The word the Hebrews used for law, "torah," meant instruction, guidance, direction. It was a word of far wider application than our word "law," for it included both oral and written instruction, and was a general rule of life.

<sup>120</sup> Leviticus, chapters 17-26.

<sup>121</sup> For a full list of these correspondences, see Driver, *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, pp. 146, 147. These are so numerous as to have led some to believe that Ezekiel was himself the author of the "holiness code."

a state as a church, or at least, a state and a church, and that the church is the superior and dominating element. At all events, Plato recognized that no permanent social life is possible except it be based on morality. Accordingly, we find the necessity of justice between man and man proved in the first of the ten books into which the treatise is divided.

And Plato's idea of justice is as remote from modern notions as Ezekiel's. It is not embodied in a concrete system of law. Indeed Plato's aversion to law is a constant and well recognized feature of his political thought.<sup>122</sup> It is not surprising, therefore, to find Plato in the *Republic* considering the state as an ethical society, and its life as a moral life. The corporate life of the state he does not think of, any more than Ezekiel did, as based on a conception of rights, nor does he conceive of justice as the maintenance or correlation of the rights of its citizens. Impressed as the Hebrews had been, with the truth that only the law written in the heart is really binding,<sup>123</sup> he would have the ruler as unfettered in his action as an artist in his creation. Consequently, both ruler and citizen are amenable to only one law — the law of justice. And justice is the will to concentrate on one's own sphere of duty ( $\tauὸ\ αὐτοῦ\ πράττειν$ )<sup>124</sup>

<sup>122</sup> See Barker, *Political Thought of Plato and Aristotle*, p. 118.

<sup>123</sup> See Psalm 19.

<sup>124</sup> See *Republic* (433), "You will remember the original principle of which we spoke at the foundation of the state,

## 76 OUR MODERN DEBT TO ISRAEL

and not to meddle with another's sphere. Justice does not reside, therefore, in an external code, but in the heart of every member of the body politic who does his duty in his appointed place. In other words, the justice of the state is based upon the citizen's sense of duty. Nor is this sense of duty a mere *lumen siccum*, a dry light of reason. It is inspired by the same inward principle that Ezekiel thought of as regnant in the hearts of the citizens of the holy city—the sense of brotherhood. The three classes into which he would divide society—rulers, soldiers, and workers—are each to be taught that their country is their mother, “that they are, therefore, bound to advise for her good, and to defend her against attacks, and her citizens they are to regard as children of the earth, and their own brothers.”<sup>125</sup>

So long as duty, that “stern daughter of the voice of God,” speaks in the heart of each member of the community, both rulers and governed, the legislative function of the state wholly disappears in Plato's scheme, and only the executive function remains. Even this is confined to enforcing certain broad outlines of education. Ezekiel had placed implicit confidence in a “holy” priesthood; Plato relied in turn upon an intelligent board of education. The problem of Ezekiel's state was to make Jerusalem so “holy” a city that every man . . . should practice one thing only, that being the thing to which his nature was most perfectly adapted; now justice is either this, or a part of this.”

<sup>125</sup> *Republic*, 414.

that Jehovah would feel at home there; the problem of Plato's state was to carry out unchanged the scheme of education laid down by its founder.

Education, according to the Platonic ideal, had the same ultimate goal as Hebrew education — namely, the knowledge of God. Again and again did the Hebrew wise-men formulate their belief that growth in wisdom meant a knowledge of God's works and ways here on the earth, and the turning of that knowledge to practical account. To the Hebrew wise-man the beginning and end of wisdom was the fear of the Lord, and to depart from evil was understanding.<sup>126</sup> That is, the Hebrew ideal of education was an ethical ideal, and its ultimate goal was righteousness of life.<sup>127</sup> No less ethical was the Platonic scheme of education, for its purpose is the knowledge of God, and its consummation is the growing like to Him — *όμοιώσις θεῷ κατὰ τὸ δυνατὸν ἀνθρώπῳ*.<sup>128</sup>

To Plato, no less than to the Hebrew sage, education meant a growth in righteousness. Speaking of Plato's scheme of education, Barker says:<sup>129</sup> "It is to gain the master-key of conduct and action, since all right conduct and proper

<sup>126</sup> Prov. 1:7.

<sup>127</sup> Pictures illustrative of the Hebrew ideal of the perfectly educated man and woman are found in Job. 31, Prov. 31 and in several of the Psalms.

<sup>128</sup> See Adam, *The Vitality of Platonism*, p. 33; Barker, *Political Thought of Plato and Aristotle*, pp. 125-127; Nettleship, *Lectures on the Republic of Plato*, pp. 217 ff; and Pater, *Plato and Platonism*, pp. 238-240.

<sup>129</sup> *Political Thought of Plato and Aristotle*, p. 127.

## 78 OUR MODERN DEBT TO ISRAEL

action will be conformed and directed to the end which is the end of all things. This is the real sense in which virtue is knowledge. If this conception be personalized, we may say that the end of education is the realization of God: it is knowing that all things are one in him, and doing in the light of that knowledge."

It is in the seventh book of the *Republic*<sup>130</sup> that Plato outlines most clearly the stages of this growth in a "knowledge which shows the eternal nature in which is no variableness." One after another, he here enumerates the virtues that will be added, and the vices that will, like soiled garments, be laid aside till finally the learner becomes fitted "to raise the eye of the soul to the universal light that lightens all things, and behold the absolute good: for that is the pattern according to which they are to order the state, and the lives of individuals, and the remainder of their own lives also."

In view of the fact that Ezekiel's holy state preceded Plato's by nearly two centuries, a protest against designating the latter as the first book of its kind seems entirely justifiable. The reasonableness of such a protest becomes the more apparent upon a brief comparison of the two books, which reveals certain fundamental resemblances between the two authors and their work. We find that both Ezekiel and Plato were transcendentalists, that they ignored existing conditions, that

<sup>130</sup> 485 ff.

they believed in the perfectability of the social organism through an educated aristocracy. Nor do we find that the resemblance ends with the idealism of the two authors. Each distrusted the efficacy of external law as a means of social betterment, and each substituted a moral principle, to be written, not on tables of stone, nor in the pages of a statute book, but in the fleshly tables of the heart of each loyal citizen. The Hebrew citizen was to be loyal to the ideal of holiness; the Greek, to the ideal of duty; and each, in his relations with his fellows, to the ideal of brotherhood.

The period of the Exile, when political questions, and the practical problems of social life no longer demanded attention, afforded an opportunity, not only for the theoretical construction of an ideal commonwealth such as Ezekiel's, but also for answering some of the questions which the ruin of the Hebrew state inevitably suggested. Of these the most insistent was the question, "For what purpose was Israel chosen? What was the real vocation of the race?" To the answering of this question, the author of the last twenty-seven chapters of Isaiah addressed himself. His name we do not know. He is variously designated as "the Second-Isaiah," "Deutero-Isaiah," or as "the Great Unknown." Whoever he was, he discovered a truth of transcendent importance. In the attempt to answer the question, "What is the vocation of Israel?" he made known the truth that God's highest call is the call to service. The calling of Is-

rael, as he saw it, was to become to the world what the prophet was to Israel — God's representative and witness, elect for the sake of mankind. In this answer, the Second-Isaiah found an explanation of the enigmatical history of Israel. To the end that Israel might fulfil its mission to give and not to receive, Israel had been trained in the hard school of adversity. All its sufferings have been borne in its vocation as "Servant of Jehovah."

In the successive passages in which the prophet portrays the "Servant of Jehovah," made perfect through suffering, and so prepared to redeem the world, he develops the ideal of service which he wished to set before the race. That Israel, idealized and personified, is represented by the "Servant of Jehovah," there can be no question. He says (and here Jehovah addresses Israel): "But thou, Israel, my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen the seed of Abraham my friend; thou whom I have taken hold of from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the corners thereof, and said unto thee, Thou art my servant, I have chosen thee and not cast thee away; fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God: . . ." <sup>131</sup> A little later in the dialogue,<sup>132</sup> the "Servant" speaks, saying: "And now saith the Lord that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, and that Israel be gathered unto him: . . . yea, he saith, It is too light a thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise

<sup>131</sup> Is. 41:8 ff.

<sup>132</sup> Is. 49:5 ff.

up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the ends of the earth." It is an ideal that Israel never consciously realized; and yet, as Tennyson says, God fulfills Himself in many ways. Though Israel never attained to the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Christ-like ideal set forth by the unknown prophet of the Exile, the race has, albeit unwillingly, become in a very real sense God's interpreter to the world. To Israel it was given to

. . . see and tell  
Of things invisible to mortal sight.<sup>133</sup>

to Israel it was given

. . . to assert eternal Providence,  
And justify the ways of God to men.<sup>134</sup>

In Zechariah's dreams we note the full development of the tendency to apocalypse, which has been noted as one of the characteristics of the post-Exilic literature. Here we find eight apocalyptic visions, which, like dissolving views, or the gorgeous figures in a kaleidoscope, change and merge insensibly into new combinations of oriental symbolism. Now the symbols are suggested by the elaborate system of postal communication of the Persian empire, the most complete in the ancient

<sup>133</sup> *Paradise Lost*, III. ll. 54, 55.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.* I. ll. 25, 26.

world; now by the war-chariots of Persia, which are employed to symbolize Jehovah's wrath against the nations of the earth. Together these visions convey a message of hope for Jerusalem; its temple is to be restored, its enemies destroyed, its exiles returned, its sin forgiven, its wickedness removed, and God's spirit is to flow through priest and prince of the Davidic line. But, though the message of Zachariah may seem to be one calculated to meet local and temporary conditions, it is really timeless and universal. In the vision of the golden candlestick,<sup>135</sup> the prophet expressed a spiritual truth, which, though the world has been slow to learn it, though indeed it has not yet accepted it, is destined to become more and more the guiding principle of the world's life, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts." It is a truth of which the whole history of Israel is an illustration, and one which is illustrated in every instance where God has chosen the weak things of the earth to confound the mighty, and the things that are not to bring to naught the things that are.

In the book of Malachi we find the beginning of a respect for heathen religion which was to appear later in a more fully developed form in the book of Jonah. Most emphatically does this nameless prophet<sup>136</sup> contrast the neglect of God by Israel

<sup>135</sup> Zech. 4. This is the vision of the seven-branched golden candlestick of the temple, its lamps fed by the two olive trees, standing, one on either side of it.

<sup>136</sup> The book is anonymous. The word "Malachi" is not

with the reverence paid to Him among the heathen. “For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name is great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense is offered unto my name, and a pure offering, for my name is great among the Gentiles, saith Jehovah of Hosts.” The lesson of the book is “that these negligent priests were to know that Jehovah was not, as they might fancy, dependent upon them, and upon the Temple at Jerusalem for acceptable service, for the world was His Temple, and even the heathen were learning to fear Him.”<sup>137</sup> In its recognition that the world was God’s temple, the passage seems like an anticipation of the statement by Israel’s greatest teacher, made to the woman of Samaria, “Believe me, the hour cometh, when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father. . . . But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth.”<sup>138</sup> That such an anticipation, based upon a generous, even catholic, recognition of the purity of heathen sacrifices, should occur in this book, which lays such stress on the necessity of a pure sacrifice, and in general, upon the temple ritual, is nothing less than amazing.

The century following 350 b. c. was a period of great humiliation and suffering to the Jewish community, but is the word translated “my messenger” in chap. 3:1.

<sup>137</sup> Mal. 1:11. Kirkpatrick, *The Doctrine of the Prophets*, p. 509.

<sup>138</sup> John 4:21-23.

## 84 OUR MODERN DEBT TO ISRAEL

munity. Naturally it left its impress upon the character of the Jewish race. Its most deplorable effect was in dampening the missionary ardor which had been awakened by the message of the Second-Isaiah. Instead of being filled with a fervid zeal to become Jehovah's witnesses to the nations, they became filled with a no less fervid desire to see the Gentiles destroyed. Indeed, the overthrow of the heathen nations came to seem a necessary preliminary to the establishment of Jehovah's kingdom of righteousness on earth.<sup>139</sup>

As a protest against such narrow intolerance the book of Jonah was written to show that God's purposes of grace are not limited to Israel alone; but that, conditional upon repentance, they include the heathen as well. Jonah appears as the exponent of the popular Israelitish creed. Reluctant to undertake a mission to the hated enemies of Israel, angry at the non-fulfillment of his prediction of ruin for Nineveh, Jonah is the personification of later Judaism. That in the conscious design of the author of the book he represents the Jewish race is more than probable; it amounts to a certainty. In such a personification, the author presented no new idea. Jeremiah, in referring to the Exile, had said: "Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon hath devoured me, . . . he hath swallowed me up like a dragon, he hath filled his maw with my delicacies; he hath cast me out. . . . And I will do judgment upon Bel in Babylon, and I

<sup>139</sup> See, for example, Joel 3.

will bring forth out of his mouth that which he hath swallowed up; . . .”<sup>140</sup> Jonah, then, is symbolic of Israel, divinely commissioned to utter to the Gentile world the truths that should make Jehovah’s temple “a house of prayer unto all nations.” This mission they had refused, preferring to embark upon the perilous sea of oriental polities, which finally engulfed them. Yet they could not evade their duty, for “the sea is his and he made it.” And so they were swallowed up by the world power, Assyria, only to be cast forth again, and recommissioned as Jehovah’s witnesses to heathendom. Still the nation, though no longer disobedient, was in need of discipline. They needed to realize more fully the great prophetic truths — that God’s threats are conditional, that national intolerance was grotesquely incongruous with Jehovah’s all-embracing pity, which makes Him ask, “Should not I have pity on Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than six score thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?”<sup>141</sup>

“With this question,” says Cornill,<sup>142</sup> “closes the last book of the prophetic literature of Israel. More simply, as something quite evident, and therefore more sublimely and touchingly, the truth was never spoken in the Old Testament, that God, as

<sup>140</sup> Jer. 51:34, 44.

<sup>141</sup> Jonah 4:11.

<sup>142</sup> *Prophets of Israel*, p. 173.

## 86 OUR MODERN DEBT TO ISRAEL

Creator of the whole earth, must also be the God and father of the entire world, in whose loving, kind, and fatherly heart all men are equal, before whom is no difference of nation and confession, but only men, whom He has created in his own image. Here Hosea and Jeremiah live anew. The unknown author of the Book of Jonah stretches forth his hand to these master hearts and intellects. In the celestial harmony of the infinite Godly love and of the infinite Godly pity, the Israelitic prophecy rings out as the most costly bequest of Israel to the whole world."

## CHAPTER III

### THE INFLUENCE OF THE PROPHETS UPON MODERN THOUGHT

Of the three classes of Israel's leaders, the strongest influence was undoubtedly exerted by the prophets. Their ideas are an integral part of our thought, and still are, as they have always been, powerful factors in all attempts of Christianity to influence social and political life. Of the educative forces for the development of democracy and social justice, that of the prophets has unquestionably been the greatest. Truly has our own Emerson said of them:

The word unto the prophets spoken  
Was writ on tables yet unbroken;  
The word by seers or sibyls told,  
In groves of oak or fanes of gold,  
Still floats upon the morning wind,  
Still whispers to the willing mind.<sup>1</sup>

Whether more "willing" or not, men's minds today are certainly more open than they have been formerly to the prophetic message.

And it is a vital one, for it concerns the coming of the kingdom of God — a kingdom wherein dwell-

<sup>1</sup> "The Problem," st. 6.

## 88 OUR MODERN DEBT TO ISRAEL

eth righteousness. They were hoping for a better social order. In our day, also, men are seeking more earnestly than ever before to find out by what system of social evolution the betterment of our social and economic order may be achieved. Various plans are being strenuously advocated — from the social revolution of certain radical reformers, to the non-militant and innocuous suggestions of those who would inaugurate a campaign of education for the substitution of the principle of co-operation for the older economic principle of competition.<sup>2</sup> Amid the babel of conflicting voices, men who recognize the kinship of the prophets' aims with ours are respectfully considering the methods they advocated for improving the social order. The prophets did not believe the world could be saved except through religion. But they unsparingly condemned those who failed to harmonize religion in its ceremonial aspect with religion in its social implications. Amos, the first of the "writing prophets," announced amid the revels of the feast at Bethel the impending fall of the Northern Kingdom; and declared that this would be the result, not of a lack of ceremonial godliness, but of social righteousness. After denouncing impartially the political crimes of all the states of Palestine, Amos utters a more detailed denunciation of the social evils of Israel.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, J. W. Petavel in *The Coming Triumph of Christian Civilization*. He advocates the establishment of educational colonies, organized as coöperative small-holding societies, which should teach industrial coöperation.

“ Thus saith the Lord: For three transgressions of Israel, yea, for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they have sold the righteous for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes: that pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor, and turn aside the way of the meek: and a man and his father will go unto the same maid, to profane my holy name: and they lay themselves down beside every altar upon clothes taken in pledge, and in the house of their God they drink the wine of such as have been fined.”<sup>3</sup> The only hope of averting the ruin that Israel’s social sin involves is, he insists, in the inauguration of a new era of social justice. “ Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live; and so the Lord, the God of hosts shall be with you, as ye say. Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate: it may be that the Lord, the God of hosts, will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph.”<sup>4</sup>

The prophets who succeeded Amos were not less insistent than he had been upon the idea that religious morality is the only thing that God cares about. They, like him, stressed in the religious life, not the creed and ceremonial, but righteous living, without which religion is as nothing. “ I desire goodness and not sacrifice,” said Hosea,<sup>5</sup> and Jesus liked to quote the words.<sup>6</sup> The book of

<sup>3</sup> Amos 2:6-8.

<sup>4</sup> Amos 5:14, 15.

<sup>5</sup> Hosea 6:6.

<sup>6</sup> Jesus quotes them twice—Matt. 9:18, and Matt. 12:7.

Isaiah begins with a contemptuous description of the means in vogue with the ritualists of his day for averting God's wrath. The Temple courts, he says, are trampled with the feet of deluded worshippers, who fancy God will be appeased by the reek of incense used to conceal the stench of the burning flesh of slaughtered beasts. "I cannot away with iniquity and the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil: learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow."<sup>7</sup> Micah also, denies that God "will be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil. . . . He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth Jehovah require of thee, but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God?"<sup>8</sup>

Jeremiah, also, regarded the social duties of man as matters of supreme religious importance. Most emphatic is his assertion that social justice is of more account than Temple worship. "Thus saith the Lord of hosts," he says, "Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to

<sup>7</sup> Is. 1:13-17.

<sup>8</sup> Micah 6:6-8. Cf. Psalm 40:6; 50:8-15; 51:16, 17.

dwell in this place. Trust ye not in lying words saying, The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are these. For if ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; if ye thoroughly execute justice between a man and his neighbor; if ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your hurt: then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, from of old even for evermore.”<sup>9</sup> Following the example of the earlier prophets, Ezekiel, the priest-prophet of the Exile, whom we should expect to be less radical than his predecessors, indicates not less clearly than they had done the social importance of religion, and insists no less strenuously upon social ethics in these words:<sup>10</sup> “But if a man be just, and do that which is lawful and right, and hath not eaten upon the mountains (food consecrated to idols), neither hath lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, neither hath defiled his neighbour’s wife, . . . and hath not wronged any, but hath restored to the debtor his pledge, hath spoiled none by violence, hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment; He that hath not given forth upon usury, neither hath taken any increase, that hath withdrawn his hand from iniquity, hath executed true judgment (justice) between man and man, hath walked in my statutes and hath kept

<sup>9</sup> Jer. 7:3-7.

<sup>10</sup> Ezek. 18:5-9.

my judgments, to deal truly; he is just, he shall surely live, saith the Lord of hosts.” The preaching of the prophets never varied in its insistence upon the idea that religion is in the first place a matter between man and his Maker, then a matter between man and society: that it must inspire men to act justly toward others, and that no people can be called religious that does not demand justice for itself and do justly to others. Even the last of them, those like Malachi, who preached when the Jewish religion had become a book religion, and Judaism had narrowed into a church, when even the prophets had become zealous for the law, for the Temple, and its ritual, were by no means blind to the fact that the national church, with its intolerance and its disregard for social justice, could hardly claim the favor of a holy God, who always regarded the inward and spiritual above the outward and visible. Malachi denounces ecclesiasticism and formal observance of a ceremonial cult, and assures his people that God will be a “witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against the false swearers; and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the Lord of hosts.”<sup>11</sup> There is no reason to question the justness of the assertion of Professor George Adam Smith regarding the teaching of the

<sup>11</sup> Mal. 3:5.

prophets, when he says:<sup>12</sup> "The student of the prophets, as he realizes their equal insistence upon the Word of God, and upon the need of strong and just rulers, upon the religious and economic rights of every common citizen, and upon the substitution, for confidence in ritual, of the ethical service of men, must recognize principles of which all social philosophies and systems since constructed present only the fragments and details."

As the earliest exponents of the fundamental truth that religion and ethics are inseparable, that the chief concern of religion is development of character, the equitable adjustment of human relationships, and the conquest of poverty and vice; and that these concerns are pre-requisite to a realization of the long-deferred hope of the kingdom of righteousness on the earth, the prophets made their most vital contribution to the most important problem of our day. To the great majority of modern men Christianity seems a debt they owe to an institution. They identify it with a membership in some church. Religion means to them the praise and worship of God, valuable for the hopes and consolations it may bring to them in the hour of their trial, difficulty, and sorrow. It is still only the fewest among men who identify religion with life. Says Professor Rauschenbusch:<sup>13</sup> "Under the influence of

<sup>12</sup> Quoted by Keeble, *The Social Teachings of the Bible*, p. 46.

<sup>13</sup> *Christianity and the Social Crisis*, p. 7.

## 94 OUR MODERN DEBT TO ISRAEL

non-Christians customs and conceptions Christianity early developed its own ceremonial system. It is, of course, far more refined. Our places of worship have no stench of blood and entrails; our priests are not expert butchers. But the immense majority of people in Christendom have holy places, where they recite a sacred ritual and go through sacred motions. They receive holy food and submit to washings that cleanse from sin. They have a priesthood with magic powers, which offers a bloodless sacrifice. This Christian ritual grew up, not as the appropriate and aesthetic expression of spiritual emotions, but as the indispensable means of pleasing and appeasing God, and of securing his favors, temporal and eternal, for those who put their hearts into these processes. This Christian ceremonial system does not differ essentially from that against which the prophets protested; with a few verbal changes, their invectives would still apply."

To men in our age, confused in their ideas of what religion really is, and groping blindly for a method of hastening the coming of a better day for humanity, the message of the prophets comes with clarifying power, affirming that religion is to "seek judgment (justice), and relieve the oppressed";<sup>14</sup> and that, until we make society religious in this sense, we shall not realize our ancient hope of the kingdom of God on earth, which these men promised.

<sup>14</sup> Is. 1:17.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE PRIESTS

From time immemorial, there has been apparent in Judaism a struggle for supremacy between two principles: the formalism of dogmatic ritual, and the direct religious sentiment. Between the idealism of the prophets, sometimes half mystical as in the authors of the prophetic apocalypse, and the discipline of the law, upheld by the priests, who were by training and by precept ritualists, there was perpetual conflict. Both politically and religiously the two classes were diametrically opposed. The prophets were radicals; the priests, conservatives. The one class was made up of the opposers, the other, of the up-holders of the established order in church and state.

Partly because they were rightly regarded as the pillars of existing society, the priests constituted the most influential class in ancient Israel. As representatives of the people in public worship, and as the guardians and interpreters of the law, they occupied in that ancient life a social position more prominent than that of either the prophets or the sages. This social prominence was reflected in their dress. In the per-

## 96 OUR MODERN DEBT TO ISRAEL

formance of their official duties they wore white linen garments.<sup>1</sup> These consisted, first, of a sort of trunk-hose of fine linen, over which was worn a long linen vestment reaching to the feet, fitting closely to the body, and confined just below the breast by a girdle of fine, white linen four fingers broad. After being wound several times around the body, it was tied, and the ends allowed to hang to the ankles. Its whole length was embroidered with flowers of white, and scarlet, and purple, and blue—the four colors of the sanctuary. The priest wore, also, a turban of white, wound many times around the head, and sewed together. He wore no shoes, at least while performing his sacred office, the putting off of the shoes being regarded, as in some Oriental countries to-day, as a necessary preliminary to entering a sacred place.<sup>2</sup>

To the holy place—the space inside the curtain where the altar stood—the priests alone had access, and there performed their most important function. The essential idea in the Hebrew thought of the priestly function was mediation between God and his people. As mediator, the priest's highest duty was to represent the people officially in their worship by offering for them the sacrifices, and, above all, the incense.<sup>3</sup> Scarcely less important was his duty of interpret-

<sup>1</sup> Ex. 28:40 ff and Josephus, *Ant.* III. VII. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Ex. 3:5.

<sup>3</sup> Num. 16:40; 18:1-5; Deut. 33:10.

ing and teaching the law.<sup>4</sup> Subordinate to these two functions were those of communicating the divine will by means of the urim and thummim, or sacred lot;<sup>5</sup> and of blessing the people in the name of the Lord.<sup>6</sup>

As official representatives of the people in public worship, the priests delivered their message through certain symbolic acts, mostly connected with the sacrifice. In doing so they made use of the dramatic method of teaching, as contrasted with the hortatory method which they employed as compilers and interpreters of the law. That they should have availed themselves of the dramatic method is not strange when we consider that the Hebrews possessed a strong dramatic instinct, but no theatre in which that instinct could find expression. Consequently, the dramatic impulse tended to the development of a stately ritual, just as in Medieval England the dramatic impulse found expression in the ceremony of the mass, with its elaborate symbolism. Out of the latter grew the modern drama through the miracle play, which was the direct result of the desire of the church to educate the people through giving its mysteries concrete representation. One wonders whether, had the Temple not been destroyed, a like evolution might not have resulted in the development of a Hebrew drama.

<sup>4</sup> Deut. 33:10; Lev. 10:10, 11.

<sup>5</sup> Num. 27:21.

<sup>6</sup> Num. 6:22-27.

At all events, the conditions that gave rise to the modern drama seem all to have been represented in ancient Israel.

The sacrifice, for example, was simply an object lesson — a method of teaching by symbols — certain truths that the priests wished to impress upon the people. Thus the three kinds of sacrifice each possessed a symbolic meaning. The sin and trespass<sup>7</sup> offering visually represented the idea of atonement. They implied that an interruption of relations between the worshipper and God had occurred, and symbolized the need for reconciliation. The burnt offering typified the complete consecration of the worshipper to God. As the need of national consecration required to be kept constantly before the eyes of the people, a burnt offering, called the "continual burnt offering" was offered each morning and evening.<sup>8</sup> The peace offering shadowed forth the realization of restored peace with God, and the joy of sin forgiven.<sup>9</sup> It is significant that when these three kinds of sacrifices were offered consecutively, the sin offering came first, then the burnt offering, and finally the peace offering, thus emphasizing by a sort of ocular demonstration the order of religious experience — atonement, consecration, and peace.

<sup>7</sup> The trespass or guilt offering was only a special kind of sin offering. See *Cambridge Companion to the Bible*, p. 407, and *Lev.* 5:1-9.

<sup>8</sup> *Lev.* 1:9; *Deut.* 33:10.

<sup>9</sup> *Lev.* 22:18, 29.

Similarly in the ritual of the animal sacrifice there were six symbolic acts. There was first the presentation of the animal at the door of the sanctuary by the person making the offering. The animal must be "without blemish" — that is, it must represent on the part of the worshipper a real sacrifice. He could not give to God what he would not offer to a friend; but, with this one restriction, he might bring what he pleased. The value of the sacrifice was never measured by its costliness. Moreover, by the presentation of the animal was symbolized the voluntary nature of the act. It was never among the Hebrews, as among pagan worshippers, regarded as compulsory.<sup>10</sup> After the presentation, the worshipper pressed his hands upon the head of the animal, thus representing the dedication of the beast to God.<sup>11</sup> Thirdly, the slaying of the animal completed the dedication previously symbolized by the laying on of hands. Fourthly, the priest collected the blood, and applied it in various ways according to the nature of the sacrifice. The blood represented the life. It therefore belonged to God; no man might touch it.<sup>12</sup> Fifthly, the priest, after preparing the body of the animal, burned it on the altar.<sup>13</sup> This burning symbolized the purification and consecration of the worshipper.

<sup>10</sup> Lev. 1:3.

<sup>11</sup> Lev. 16:21; cf. Num. 27:18; Deut. 34:9.

<sup>12</sup> I Sam. 14:32-34; Lev. 17:3 ff.

<sup>13</sup> In some cases, the fat only was burnt, as in the case of the peace offering.

Sixthly, in the case of the peace offering, the sacrificial meal was eaten by the person making the sacrifice and by his family. This sacrificial meal represented the union of God and his people, and the rejoicing caused by the restored concord.

This latter part of the sacrificial cult clearly proves that the primitive idea of the nature of the sacrificial act persisted even to the latest period of Old Testament history. In the early period, deity was supposed to be present and to share the food with his people. Consequently, every meal became in a sense a sacrifice.<sup>14</sup> Such a primitive sacrificial meal is described in 1 Samuel, Chap. 9, as having been eaten at Shiloh. The prophet Samuel was present, not however as a priest, for none was needed, but simply as an honored guest to furnish dignity to the feast by his presence, and sanctity by his blessing of the sacrifice.<sup>15</sup> As on all such occasions when animal food was eaten, God was supposed to be present, and a part of the food was set aside for him; but the important feature of the occasion was not religious, but festal. The modern picnic dignified by the presence of a clergyman to say grace before the food is eaten furnishes a modern analogy. Indeed, some have gone so far as to assert<sup>16</sup> that the modern picnic is an evolution from such primitive sacrificial feasts, as the New

<sup>14</sup> See W. R. Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, p. 236 ff, and Day, *Social Life of the Hebrews*, p. 42 ff.

<sup>15</sup> 1 Sam. 9:13.

<sup>16</sup> Day, *Social Life of the Hebrews*, p. 45.

England donation party is a survival of the custom in later Israel of sending a portion of the slain animal to the priest. That sacrifice was originally thought of as a meal offered to deity is evidenced, also, by the fact that the Hebrew word for sacrifice (*minhah*) means a gift, and that the gifts offered in sacrifice were always something to eat or drink. Again and again the material of the sacrifice is spoken of as the "food," or "bread, of God."<sup>17</sup> So far as the early sacrificial feast was religious at all, it embodied a very simple idea. God was thought of as being present with the feasters, as sharing the food with them, and as blessing them. In other words the essential idea in the early sacrifice was communion.

This basic idea of communion is characteristic of all the Hebrew thought of sacrifice, though the fact is somewhat obscured by the later development of the sacrificial cult. The close parallel between the development of the sacrificial cult and the evolution of the idea of God in Israel has been pointed out.<sup>18</sup> As the conception grew that Jahwe, the God of the whole world, was an altogether transcendent deity, and when such an awe came to be attached to the divine name that it became unutterable, the idea of the difficulty of sinful man's approach to such an exalted being became more and more prom-

<sup>17</sup> Lev. 21:6, 8, 17, 21; 22:25; Ezek. 44:7.

<sup>18</sup> S. G. Smith, *Religion in the Making*, p. 176.

inent. In other words, as the idea of God became exalted, the difficulty of approaching his awful presence came to be emphasized.<sup>19</sup> The greatest obstacle to man's approach was sin. Before communion could be enjoyed, therefore, the sin that separated man from God must be atoned for. Hence it came about that in proportion as the priestly thought of God became exalted, the ritual became more elaborate and more sombre as the idea of the need of atonement became more prominent.

The whole idea of atonement in the priestly code was based upon a realization of sin as a cause of estrangement from God, and of the need of reconciliation before communion could be enjoyed.<sup>20</sup> The sin must in some way be atoned for, "covered" is the literal meaning of the word, so as to be put out of God's sight in order that He and his worshipper might be *at-one* again. The covering of the sin must be done by God, not by man, for only God could remove it. The sin-offering and the trespass-offering, were not offered, therefore, with the thought of appeasing God's anger, nor of averting a penalty, but with the thought that by these offerings the soul of the worshipper might be restored to a friendly relation with God.<sup>21</sup> As Dr. Lyman Abbott says:<sup>22</sup>

<sup>19</sup> See Marti, *Religion of the Old Testament*, pp. 220 ff.

<sup>20</sup> See article "Atonement" in *The Jewish Encyclopaedia*.

<sup>21</sup> See A. B. Davidson, *Theology of the Old Testament*, pp. 320-325.

<sup>22</sup> *Life and Literature of the Ancient Hebrews*, p. 159.

“The Levitical sacrifice was a means for the purification of the sinner, not for the pacification of Jehovah.” With this idea of the significance of the atonement in mind, it is easier to understand the symbolism of the sprinkling of the blood. To the Hebrew the blood represented the life. The ceremony of the priest’s sprinkling of the blood upon the altar emphasized the idea that there had been a renewal of man’s covenant of life with God. This appears to be the meaning of the statement in the Law:<sup>23</sup> “For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh atonement by reason of the life.”

The sacrificial rites were, therefore, a symbolical drama intended to represent visually and through action certain fundamental truths. These truths were: first, that God is holy; secondly, that man is by his sin estranged from him; thirdly, that the estrangement must be removed by an atonement (a covering of the sin by deity) before communion can be restored.

As leaders of Israelitish thought, the priests gave their message, not only dramatically through the symbolism of the sacrificial cult, but partly through the Law, of which they were at the same time the authors, the conservers, and the interpreters. In order to understand their message

<sup>23</sup> Lev. 17:11. See, also, Trumbull, *The Blood Covenant*, p. 247.

it becomes necessary, therefore, to consider briefly what Hebrew law was in distinction from other legal systems. Only by such a comparative method of approach can we hope to understand what was the basic principle upon which the whole system of Hebrew jurisprudence was really founded, and to appreciate the uniqueness and the loftiness of the priestly contribution to the ethical equipment of our race.

Law, as we to-day understand it, a body of enacted rules recognized by a community as binding, was unknown in ancient Israel. The word they used for law, "torah," meant instruction, direction, guidance, and was a word of far wider application than our word "law," for it included both oral and written instructions,<sup>24</sup> and was a general rule of life. Its gradual development, in the light of modern scholarship, may be clearly traced through the four periods which correspond to the stages of growth characteristic of all ancient legal systems of which we have any knowledge.<sup>25</sup> There was, first, the period of natural law, or lawlessness. Secondly, there was the period of divine law, or that in which all questions were referred to and decided by men, or classes, regarded as representing the deity. Such decisions did not presuppose a law

<sup>24</sup> Compare Dent. 17:11.

<sup>25</sup> See Maine, *Ancient Law*, Int. pp. XV-XVI. See, also, Kent and Sanders, *Biblical and Semitic Studies*, "The Growth of Israelitish Law," pp. 63, 64.

to have been violated, but were transmitted from a higher power into the judge's mind at the moment of giving sentence. To this succeeded the period of customary, or unwritten law, when law was assumed to be precisely known to a privileged order or caste. In a time precedent to a knowledge of the art of writing, the existence of such a caste was really necessary to the conservation of the customs of a race. Finally there was a period of codes, or of written law, when pre-existent law was crystallized, and when the spontaneous development of law, consequently, ceased.

The codification of Israel's law was a long process, covering several centuries.<sup>26</sup> It began with certain primitive codes, so simple and so concise as to suggest that they were merely oral instructions reduced to writing. Such is the decalogue, "the ten words," in the two forms (Exod. 20: 1-17 and Deut. 5: 6-21); the small book of the covenant<sup>27</sup> and the large book of the covenant.<sup>28</sup> The briefest examination of this collection of primitive codes reveals their uniqueness. The fundamental principle that underlies them is that human society is bound together by moral laws that have their origin, not in the will of an

<sup>26</sup> See Fowler, *History of the Literature of Ancient Israel*, pp. 293 ff, and Fiske, *The Great Epic of Israel*, pp. 229 ff.

<sup>27</sup> Exod. 34:12-14; 34:17; 34:19-20; 34:18 and 21-23; 34:25, 26.

<sup>28</sup> Exod. 20:23-26; 21:2-6; 21:7-11; 21:12-16; 21:17; 21:18-25; 21:26-23:19.

earthly monarch, nor in the collective wills of a legislative body, but in God himself. Being in source divine, they are as unalterable as the Medes and Persians claimed their laws to be, or as the laws of nature really are. In recognizing these moral laws, and in submitting to them, the Hebrews pledged themselves to a set of principles without a parallel in any human polity. Theirs was a federal and social contract, not between the people at large and certain privileged classes, to whom were to be delegated a little brief authority; nor between the people and certain individuals, regarded as possessing a divine right to govern, but between the Hebrew nation and the founder of the state, regarded as the Lord of the heavens and the earth. Moses, the great law-giver of Israel, is represented as declaring:<sup>29</sup> “Behold the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the Lord’s thy God, the earth also, with all that herein is. Only the Lord had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them, even you above all peoples, as it is this day.”

Not less fundamental was the idea of monotheism connected with the covenant. “Thou shalt have no other gods before me” was the first command of the decalogue;<sup>30</sup> and “Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord”<sup>31</sup> remained the basic article of the creed of Israel through all succeeding years. No other people

<sup>29</sup> Deut. 10:14, 15.

<sup>30</sup> Ex. 20:3.

<sup>31</sup> Deut. 6:4.

of that age believed this. There was not a civil constitution then in being that was not based upon the assumed truth of polytheism. Israel alone was to justify its election from among the nations by its identification with the worship of the one great Creator.

Closely related to the emphasis upon the unity of God was the stress laid by these primitive codes upon the unity of the state, and the equality of its citizens. There was absolutely no recognition of a privileged class. The institution of the priesthood, and the setting apart of the tribe of Levi for their peculiar function, with the consequent development of a sacerdotal and literary aristocracy, was a later phase of legalism, and was entirely opposed to the principles of the early codes. In contrast to the polity of ancient Egypt, for example, there were to be recognized in Israel no hereditary castes. No dignities nor special privileges were to be assigned to one class, and no inherited inferiority to another. All were to be equally privileged, and all were amenable to the same duties.

The principles governing the inter-relations of the members of the Hebrew community, as set forth by the primitive codes, are thus restated by Doctor Abbott:<sup>32</sup> "Spiritual reverence for God; preservation of some time free from the drudgery of toil for the development of the higher nature; respect for parents; regard for the rights of per-

<sup>32</sup> *Life and Literature of the Ancient Hebrews*, p. 112.

son, of the family, of property, of reputation; and, last, this respect real and spontaneous, not formal and enforced." That these are the fundamental laws of human life, upon the maintenance of which the welfare, and even the continued existence of the social order depends, there can, of course, be no question. "When a community," continues Doctor Abbott, commenting upon the passage above cited, "bases government on either the power of the governor, leading to despotism, or on the consent of the governed, leading to anarchy, it violates the first of these laws. When it substitutes symbols for realities, promotes and encourages the spirit of irreverence, devotes all its energies to material advancement, forgetting all need of, and all ministry to the higher life, and makes every day a workday, and wealth the measure of prosperity, it violates the second, third and fourth laws. When, through the disregard of parents, it suffers the disintegration of the family, which is itself the unit of organized society, and so prepares the way for widespread social disorder, it violates the fifth law. When it fails to afford protection of the innocent from the oppression of the strong or the violence of mobs, or suffers such industrial conditions as destroy men and women and children before their time in mining and manufacturing industries, it violates the sixth law. When it permits the practice of polygamy, or encourages licentiousness in legalized forms by freedom of

divorce, it violates the seventh law. When it taxes a helpless and prostrate people under forms of law, giving them by law none of the benefits for which governments are organized, it violates the eighth law. When it allows honored citizens whose life has been devoted to the public service of the community to be slandered by a sensational and unprincipled press, and continues to give the press its support, it violates the ninth law. When it depends wholly or chiefly on force to maintain these laws, failing to furnish such education as will make obedience to them voluntary and spontaneous, it violates the tenth law." The modern broadening of the social consciousness, and the powerful moral impulse aroused by such investigations as that of the state vice commissions into the relations of poverty, with its drain upon the moral and physical nature, to social delinquency, indicate clearly that at last we are awaking to a realization, belated, but more or less complete, that the fundamental principles underlying Hebrew legislation were the elemental laws of human life, which can be ignored only at the expense of the social order.

Upon such a substratum the legal system of later Israel was reared. It was a gradual growth, of which some of the stages are clearly evident. One of the most important of them certainly was the codification of existing law made in the sixth century B. C. The work was done by a man, or a group of men, whose names are

unknown, because in the times of Manasseh, when the work was done, discovery would have meant death to the authors, and the destruction of the manuscript. The preservation of the manuscript was insured by concealing it in the Temple. Manasseh died in 641 B. C., and Amon, his son, was slain by his own people after a reign of less than two years. The accession of Josiah, a boy of eight, seems to have reawakened the religious spirit in Israel. In the eighteenth year of Josiah (621 B. C.) Hilkiah, the priest, gave to Shaphan, the scribe, on the occasion of the latter's official visit to the Temple, the book of the codes which had been found there. This, Shaphan at once read before the young king. The effect was immediate and far-reaching. The king called the people together for a solemn ratification of the book as the law of the kingdom.<sup>33</sup>

The popularization and the public ratification of the Book of Deuteronomy, for this is the name by which we know the manuscript that Hilkiah delivered to Shaphan,<sup>34</sup> were from our modern point of view among the most important events of the ancient world. "Their results," declares Professor Cornill,<sup>35</sup> "have been simply immeasurable. By them Israel, nay, the whole world, has been

<sup>33</sup> II Kings 23.

<sup>34</sup> See Moore, in his introduction to the edition of "The Book of Deuteronomy" (*International Critical Commentary*) and Driver, *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, p. 69 ff.

<sup>35</sup> *Prophets of Israel*, p. 82 ff.

directed into new courses. We are today still under the influence of beliefs which were then promulgated for the first time, under the sway of forces which then first came into life."

The Deuteronomic<sup>36</sup> code reemphasized certain basis principles of the earlier legislation. At the beginning of the book we find the decalogue repeated, and the author reasserting in unequivocal terms the religious basis of the state, and the unity of God.<sup>37</sup> Like the older codes, this, too, laid great emphasis upon the necessity of a sanction in the conscience of the people. Indeed this idea that obedience to law must be voluntary was, and continued to be, one of the unique features of Hebrew legislation. In contrast to the elaborate system of police, and courts, and penalties that we are accustomed to see employed for the enforcement of the law in modern Christendom, there was in ancient Israel comparatively little legal machinery. The lack of it was due to the Hebrew belief that the law was not something outside man, an injunction laid upon him from without; but that it was an objective presentation of man's own reason and sense of justice. By the author of Deuteronomy, God is represented as saying to Israel:<sup>38</sup> "For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not too hard

<sup>36</sup> The name is significant. It means the "second law," or the "second giving of the law."

<sup>37</sup> Deut. 6:4; 10:17; cf. 3:24, 4:35, 39.

<sup>38</sup> Deut. 30:11-14.

for thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, and make us to hear it, that we may do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, and make us hear it, that we may do it? But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it." That obedience to the law was not obligatory, but a matter of moral choice, is emphasized again and again. Once Moses is made to say,<sup>39</sup> "I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before thee life and death, the blessing and the curse: wherefore choose life, that thou mayest live, thou and thy seed."

Yet Deuteronomy was more than an emphatic re-affirmation of the fundamental principle of loyalty to Jehovah laid down in the Covenant. It was a re-formulation of an older legislation, and an adaptation of it, under prophetic influence, to new needs. It was an attempt to realize in practice the ideals of the eighth century prophets, to transform the nation, demoralized by the idolatry prevalent under Manasseh's rule, into a true theocracy; to awaken Judah to renewed love to God and man, which Hosea had declared to be the first of human duties. It is noticeable that the remarkable summary of the whole duty of man found in

<sup>39</sup> Deut. 30:19. See, also, Kent, *Origin and Permanent Value of the Old Testament*, pp. 140, 141.

Deuteronomy 10:12 is obviously borrowed almost verbatim from Micah's statement of the essentials of true religion,<sup>40</sup> and hence embodies the essential teachings of Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah. Nothing better illustrates the extent to which Deuteronomy reflects the spirit of social justice awakened by the prophets of the eighth century<sup>41</sup> than the legislation regarding slaves.<sup>42</sup> Yet the spirit of altruism in the Deuteronomic legislation appears not alone in the laws regulating the treatment of slaves. Nowhere else in ancient legislation is the sacredness of human life emphasized to the same extent. Elsewhere we may look in vain for such a law as that a man in building a house shall "make a battlement for thy roof, that thou bring not blood upon thy house, if any man fall from thence."<sup>43</sup> Nor is there anywhere in other ancient legislation, either theoretical or practical, a parallel to the Deuteronomic law regarding homicide by an unknown person.<sup>44</sup> This law is said to be the origin of the coroner's inquest of modern times. The law provided that, when a man was found slain in the field, the elders and judges should "measure unto the cities which are

<sup>40</sup> Micah 6:8.

<sup>41</sup> It will be remembered that it was a prophet who first taught by an impressive object lesson the duty of treating humanely prisoners of war. See II Kings 6. Cf. Deut. 21:10-14.

<sup>42</sup> See Deut. 15:12-18; 23:15 ff; 24:14 ff.

<sup>43</sup> Deut. 22:8.

<sup>44</sup> Deut. 21:1-9. The nearest parallel is Plato *de Leg.* I. 9.

round about him that is slain.” Then by a solemn ritual, the elders of the nearest city were to purge their city of the murder, and solemnly to disavow their knowledge of the criminal. In the absence of newspapers, no better means could have been devised to give publicity to the crime, and to force any one knowing the facts to reveal them.

Nor was human life alone considered worthy of protection by the legalists of ancient Israel. He that doth the ravens feed, yea, providently eaters for the sparrow, was thought to require humane treatment of our poor relations, the animals. Consequently, the Hebrew was forbidden to “muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn.”<sup>45</sup> He was prohibited, also, from taking the mother bird from her eggs, “that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days.”<sup>46</sup> Humane societies are usually regarded as of modern origin. It is interesting, therefore, to find this national society for the prevention of cruelty to animals dating from the time of Josiah.

We are hearing a good deal in these days about “conservation,” and “forest preservation” is becoming a political slogan; but the idea is not a new one. The Hebrews had such a sense of the beauty and the utility of trees that they loved the cedars that waved on Lebanon—“the cedars that He hath planted.”<sup>47</sup> The growth of the tree became to them the symbol of spiritual growth; “The righteous shall grow like the cedar in Leb-

<sup>45</sup> Deut. 25:4.

<sup>46</sup> Deut. 22:6.

<sup>47</sup> Ps. 104:16.

anon,"<sup>48</sup> and "shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of waters."<sup>49</sup> So great was their regard for trees that they were forbidden to cut them down even in an enemy's country, "for, is the tree of the field man," pertinently asks the law-giver, "that it should be besieged of thee?"<sup>50</sup>

The book of Deuteronomy was an attempt to realize the prophetic hope of the kingdom of God on earth. Through a pure worship of God, and through righteousness and benevolence of social life, Israel was to become a real theocracy—a nation governed directly by the will of God. Though it failed to accomplish the purpose for which it was designed, though, by making a book the foundation of religion, it substituted the dead letter for the living revelation of God, it nevertheless merits the designation given it by Professor Cornill of "perhaps the most significant and momentous book that was ever written." In justification of his estimate, Professor Cornill says: "The opposition of secular and sacred, of laity and clergy, of State and Church, the conception of a holy writ and of a divine inspiration, can be traced back in its last roots to the Deuteronomy of the year 621, together with the whole history of revealed religion down to the present time, including not only Judaism but Christianity and Islam, who have simply borrowed these ideas from Judaism."<sup>51</sup>

<sup>48</sup> Ps. 92:12.

<sup>50</sup> Deut. 20:19.

<sup>49</sup> Ps. 1:1.

<sup>51</sup> *Prophets of Israel*, pp. 89, 90.

The third stage in the growth of Hebrew legislation is represented by the Levitical code, so called because it is found in the book of Leviticus (with parts of Exodus) and Numbers.<sup>52</sup> In distinction from Deuteronomy, it is not didactic, but is rather a manual of religious customs and practices.<sup>53</sup> As such, it became the official guide of the returned exiles; and was formally proclaimed and adopted in the time of Ezra.<sup>54</sup> Like the Deuteronomic legislation, it was an attempt to present in the concrete form of specific precepts the broadly ethical truths that the prophets had long proclaimed. As summarized by Nehemiah, it contained eight important regulations:<sup>55</sup>

- 1 The prohibition of marriages with the surrounding heathen.<sup>56</sup>
- 2 Laws designed to insure a strict observance of the sabbaths and holy days.<sup>57</sup>
- 3 The law of the sabbatical year with the remission of all debts.<sup>58</sup>
- 4 The imposition of a tax annually of one-third of a shekel per capita for the support of the temple services, including the offerings.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>52</sup> Exod. 25:31; 34:29–10:38; Leviticus, and Numbers.

<sup>53</sup> See Harper, *The Priestly Element in the Old Testament*, p. 188.

<sup>54</sup> Neh. 8–10.

<sup>55</sup> This summary is taken from Harper, *Priestly Element in the Old Testament*, p. 49.

<sup>56</sup> Neh. 10:30.

<sup>57</sup> Neh. 10:31.

<sup>58</sup> Neh. 10:31.

<sup>59</sup> Neh. 10:32, 33.

5 The arrangement for the furnishing of the wood for the burnt offerings.<sup>60</sup>

6 The law requiring the bringing of the first-fruits and firstlings to the priests at the temple.<sup>61</sup>

7 The law requiring the people to give tithes to the Levites, and that the priests bring tithes of these tithes to the temple.<sup>62</sup>

8 The regulations calling for hearty support of the temple and constant faithfulness to it.<sup>63</sup>

Some of these regulations are unknown to the Deuteronomic code, as the law of the sabbatical year; the tax of one-third of a shekel for the temple services; the law regarding the supply of fire-wood for the sacrifices; and the law concerning tithes.

One section of the Levitical code deserves especial consideration. This is the collection of laws found in the seventeenth to the twenty-sixth chapters of Leviticus. From the emphasis that these laws put upon the holiness of Jehovah, and upon the need for a corresponding holiness on the part of those who worship Him, the collection is now generally referred to as the "Holiness Code." The most probable date assigned for its composition is the decade between the first and second captivity (597-586 B. C.). The author was evidently a priest; and, because he was a priest, a ritualist, who saw in the desecrated temple and

<sup>60</sup> Neh. 10:34.

<sup>62</sup> Neh. 10:38.

<sup>61</sup> Neh. 10:35-37.

<sup>63</sup> Neh. 10:39.

the scattered worshippers a divine punishment for national sin. His aim, therefore, was to produce a code that should, by making the restored temple the center of national life, emphasize the authority and holiness of God.

Though the regulations of the Holiness Code cover much of the same ground as those of the earlier Deuteronomic legislation, they differ in their scope, dealing more with the ceremonial than with the civil side of life. Minute directions regarding the observance of "holy convocations,"<sup>64</sup> the lamps in the Tabernacle,<sup>65</sup> and the shew-bread,<sup>66</sup> appear at a casual reading of the Holiness Code to have usurped the place of the broadly ethical principles set forth in the earlier codes under prophetic influence. Yet the superficial appearance of narrow sacerdotalism in the Holiness Code is highly misleading. Like the earlier legislation, it is based upon universal and enduring principles. So filled was the author with the longing for social justice that Ezekiel found the Code adapted with slight modifications, to become the guide of the civil and religious life of the sanctified citizenship of his ideal commonwealth — the holy city.<sup>67</sup>

For becoming the legal manual of an ideal community whose members sin only inadvertently, this law of holiness, *das Heiligkeitgesetz*,<sup>68</sup> was emi-

<sup>64</sup> Lev. 23.

<sup>66</sup> Lev. 24:5-9.

<sup>65</sup> Lev. 24:1-4.

<sup>67</sup> Ezek. 40-48.

<sup>68</sup> It was so called by Klostermann in 1877.

nently fitted. The whole spirit of its enactments is ideal and wholly alien to that of any other ancient code outside of Israel. The basic idea of Roman Law, as expressed in its earliest code—that of the twelve tables,—is the equality of rights of Roman citizens—“omnibus, summis in finisque, iura aequare.”<sup>69</sup> The fundamental conception of Hebrew law was not one of rights, but of duty. Members of the commonwealth of Israel were not, in the eyes of the law, citizens with rights to be conserved, but members of a family with mutual obligations to fulfill. The obligation that included all the others was that of mutual forbearance and love. It is well stated in Leviticus 19:17-18. “Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart. . . . Thou shalt not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people; but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself: I am Jehovah.” That this was regarded by later leaders of Israelitish thought as an adequate summary of the teachings of the law is clearly shown by certain passages in the New Testament. Perhaps the most significant of these is Jesus’s answer to the lawyer of the Pharisees who asked what was the great commandment of the law. In his reply<sup>70</sup> Jesus quoted the latter

<sup>69</sup> So the fundamental conception of feudal law was the maintenance of the power of the feudal superior. In English law it is the liberty of the subject. See Keeble, *Social Teaching of the Bible*, p. 76.

<sup>70</sup> Matt. 22:34-39; Matt. 5:43; 7:12; 19:16-19.

part of this passage, with the comment that upon this, together with the command in Deuteronomy<sup>71</sup> to love the Lord whole-heartedly "the whole law hangeth, and the prophets"; that is, these two commands are at the basis of all prophetic and priestly teaching.

The extent to which equity and forbearance underlie the regulations of the Holiness Code is especially apparent in the provisions, supplementary to those of the earlier codes, for the considerate treatment of the bondman and the slave. By no other system of legislation were the personal rights even of the slave safeguarded to the same extent. The humane quality of this legislation can be best appreciated upon a brief comparison of the condition of the slave under the Roman and the Hebrew law; for, though both the Romans and the Hebrews tolerated slavery, the lot of the slave was quite different under the two systems.<sup>72</sup> Under the Roman civil law, the slave was a thing and not a person. He had absolutely no rights. He could own no property; even his life was entirely in the hands of his master, who could kill or torture him at will. As the number of slaves

<sup>71</sup> Deut. 6:5.

<sup>72</sup> The Romans defended slavery by basing the institution upon an imaginary agreement between the victor and his vanquished foe, according to which the vanquished bargained, in return for his life that he had legitimately forfeited, to serve his conqueror. Such a theory, though obviously unsound, influenced the legal status of the Roman slave.

increased,<sup>73</sup> it was found necessary to protect them by legislation. By a law in force some time before 79 A. D., masters were forbidden to deliver their slaves to the beasts without a magistrate's order.<sup>74</sup> In the reign of Hadrian, the consent of a magistrate was required before a master could kill a slave. The only way in which the condition of a Roman slave differed from that of the dog or horse, protected, as in modern times, by laws requiring that he be treated humanely, was in the capacity the slave possessed of becoming, through certain legal formalities, a free man. There was always before the eyes of the Roman slave the hope of becoming free. He might by a generous master be manumitted. The wholesale manumission of slaves by the will of the owner (*Manumissio testamento*), in order to secure their presence at his funeral as living witnesses to his kindness, became so common a practice under the Empire that in 8 A. D. a law was made<sup>75</sup> providing that the owner of slaves might at his death free only a fixed proportion of his slaves, and that in no case should the number freed exceed one hundred. That cruel punishments were not unusually inflicted upon Roman slaves there is abundant testimony. They were sometimes compelled to work

<sup>73</sup> In the time of Horace, it was not unusual for an ordinary citizen to own two hundred slaves.

<sup>74</sup> Leage, *Roman Private Law*, p. 48.

<sup>75</sup> This law was repealed under Justinian.

in chains or fetters.<sup>76</sup> Runaway slaves, who were recaptured, were branded in the forehead, and were called "notati" or "inscripti."<sup>77</sup> Slaves were sometimes suspended by the hands, while heavy weights were attached to the feet.<sup>78</sup> The cruelty of Roman women to their female slaves seems to have been notorious.<sup>79</sup> When slaves died, they were thrown into a pit with dead animals, unless, as Cato advised,<sup>80</sup> they had been previously traded off for old oxen or cows. Old and sick slaves were disposed of, either by being killed outright, or by being exposed on an island in the Tiber.<sup>81</sup> Truly the lot of the Roman slave was such as to justify the Hebrew assertion that the tender mercies of the heathen are cruel.

While there were in ancient Israel, no restrictions in law or sentiment against the ownership of slaves, the duty of treating them humanely was insisted upon to a degree that would have seemed to the Greeks a stumbling block, and to the Romans foolishness.

Slaves<sup>82</sup> in Israel were of two classes — Hebrew

<sup>76</sup> Plautus, *Most.* 1, 1, 18; Terence, *Phormio* 2, 1, 20.

<sup>77</sup> Martial, 7:75; 8:75; Cie. *De Off.*, 2, 7.

<sup>78</sup> Plautus, *Asin.* 2, 2, 31.

<sup>79</sup> Juvenal, *Sat.*, VI. 173-175, 177, 498; Ovid, *Am.* I. 14, 15; Martial, 2, 66.

<sup>80</sup> *De Re Rust.* II.

<sup>81</sup> Uhlhorn *Conflict of Christianity with Heathenism.* I., II., 5.

<sup>82</sup> The Hebrew word "ēbed" generally means "slave," but when used figuratively, as in Is. 20:3 and Jer. 37:2 of the subjects of God, or of a king, it is always rendered "ser-

and non-Hebrew. A Hebrew might become a slave in one of two ways, either voluntarily, because of poverty,<sup>83</sup> or involuntarily when the court sold him into slavery as a punishment for theft.<sup>84</sup> Even in the latter case, the sale had to be a private one. A Hebrew could not be sold into bondage from an auction block, nor even from the sidewalk where other slaves were sold.<sup>85</sup> The service of a Hebrew bondman could not be made severe, "Thou shalt not rule over him with rigor," said the Law, "but shalt fear thy God."<sup>86</sup> His master could not impose upon him any humiliating task.<sup>87</sup> Moreover, his time of service was limited — in the case of the man sold involuntarily — to six years, in that of the man who sold himself, to a longer time, generally to ten or twenty years. In either instance the Hebrew slave might become free at any time by the payment of a sum of money proportionate to the time of his unexpired service. If he became ill during the time of his servitude and was unable to work, the time lost was not counted against him, provided it did not exceed four years. Only if it exceeded four years, was he required to make up the time lost.

vant." When the word is used of Hebrew slaves it is generally translated "servant" or "bondman," as in Lev. 25:49.

<sup>83</sup> Lev. 25:39.

<sup>84</sup> Ex. 22:2, 3.

<sup>85</sup> Maimonides, quoted in *Jewish Encyclopaedia*, article "Slavery."

<sup>86</sup> Lev. 25:43.

<sup>87</sup> Lev. 25:39, 40.

In any event, he was to be freed in the Sabbatical year,<sup>88</sup> unless he preferred to remain in service.<sup>89</sup> Even if he elected to remain in service, the Hebrew slave never forfeited his rights as a man. If he suffered personal injury at the hands of his master, so that he lost an eye or a tooth, he could sue his master, and recover damages. When freed, the slave was entitled to a parting gift.<sup>90</sup> The gift could not be made in money, but must be from the flock, the threshing floor, and the wine-press, and must, according to the rabbis, be of the value of thirty shekels (about twenty dollars).

Over non-Hebrew slaves, also, the power of the master was strictly limited. Bodily injury at the hands of the owner that caused the loss of an eye or a tooth entitled the slave to immediate manumission.<sup>91</sup> An injury to a slave causing death the same day was treated as murder.<sup>92</sup> If a slave escaped, the law forbade those with whom he had taken refuge to return him to his master.<sup>93</sup> Upon this point, the law was quite explicit: "Thou shalt not deliver unto his master a servant that is

<sup>88</sup> Ex. 21:2-6; Jer. 34:8 ff seems to indicate that this law was not always enforced.

<sup>89</sup> The year of Jubilee, also, was a year of general emancipation of the slaves, as well as of returning mortgaged property to its hereditary owners. II Chron. 36:21; Jer. 34:8, 14, 15, 17; Ezek. 46:17; Is. 61:1, 2; 63:4.

<sup>90</sup> Deut. 15:12-15.

<sup>91</sup> Ex. 21:26, 27.

<sup>92</sup> Ex. 21:20, 21. Cf. Lev. 24:17, 22.

<sup>93</sup> Deut. 23:15, 16. But the owner might go in pursuit of a runaway slave, I Kings 2:39, 40. Among the Romans, the

escaped from his master unto thee, he shall dwell with thee, in the midst of thee, in the place which he shall choose within one of thy gates, where it pleaseth him best: thou shalt not oppress him."

The Law provided, not only for the humane treatment of non-Hebrew slaves, but for their admittance under certain conditions, to a share in the religious privileges of true Israelites. They were not allowed, any more than the Hebrews themselves, to work on the Sabbath,<sup>94</sup> the main reason assigned in the law for the institution of the Sabbath as a day of rest is "that thine ox and thine ass may have rest, and the son of thy handmaid (the slave), and the sojourner may be refreshed."<sup>95</sup> Again, in Deuteronomy, the reason for the strict observance of the Sabbath is given "that thy man-servant and thy maid-servant may rest as well as thou. And thou shalt remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt . . ."<sup>96</sup> The non-Hebrew slave might even join in the Passover feast provided he first become circumcised.<sup>97</sup> This does not mean that he was required to become a proselyte, for there is no mention of baptism or sacrifice, which, with

law strictly forbade the harboring of runaway slaves. A special class of persons known as *fugitirarii* made the pursuit and recapture of runaway slaves a regular business. Florus, III. 19.

<sup>94</sup> Ex. 20:10.

<sup>95</sup> Ex. 23:12.

<sup>96</sup> Deut. 5:14, 15.

<sup>97</sup> Ex. 12:44; Deut. 16:11, 14.

## 126 OUR MODERN DEBT TO ISRAEL

circumcision, were necessary preliminaries in the case of proselytes before they could become "children of the covenant." It is deeply significant of the spirit of tolerance that underlay Hebrew law that in the command to observe the joyous festivals of Israel, the slaves are expressly mentioned as included in the invitation to "rejoice before Jehovah," with "the Levite that is within thy gates, forasmuch as he hath no portion, nor inheritance with you."<sup>98</sup>

But the bondmen and the slaves were not the only unfortunates whose welfare was an object of solicitude to the legalists who framed the provisions of the Holiness Code. They provided for the continued freedom and independence of even the poorest citizens through the regulation of land tenure. Of the sacred soil of Palestine, each citizen had according to the provisions of the Levitical code, at least theoretically, a right to an equal share;<sup>99</sup> and this patrimony was inalienable. Upon this point the Holiness Code was quite explicit. "The land shall not be sold in perpetuity; for the land is mine: for ye are strangers and sojourners with me. And in all the land of your possession ye shall grant a redemption for the land. If thy brother be waxen poor, and sell some of his possession, then shall his kinsman that is next unto him come, and shall redeem that which his brother hath sold. And if a man have no one to redeem it, and he be waxen rich and find

<sup>98</sup> Deut. 12:12.

<sup>99</sup> Num. 33:54.

sufficient to redeem it; then let him count the years of the sale thereof, and restore the overplus unto the man to whom he sold it; and he shall return unto his possession. But if he be not able to get it back for himself, then that which he hath sold shall remain in the hand of him that hath bought it unto the year of jubilee: and in the jubilee it shall go out, and he shall return unto his possession.”<sup>100</sup> Now in the permanent ownership of the land by those who lived upon it, the citizens possessed the surest guarantee of their liberty, for history shows nothing more clearly than that those who own the territories of a state will exercise the strongest influence over the state’s public affairs. It is possible for the land to be in the possession of one, of the few, or of the many. If the ruler owns the land, then those who cultivate the soil will be wholly subject to his will; and the government will be an unlimited monarchy. If the ownership of the land is vested in the few, the real power of government will be in the hands of an aristocracy, while those who till the soil will be mere vassals. If the land be the inalienable possession of the citizens, the true power and authority of government of the state will be in its citizens; and the state will be a true democracy. Since the latter was the case in ancient Israel, the sovereignty resided in the whole body of the people.<sup>101</sup>

<sup>100</sup> Lev. 25:23-28.

<sup>101</sup> Wines, *Commentary on the Laws of the Ancient He-*

That the citizenship of Israel did actually, in many instances, control public policy, there can be no question. In this connection, the method of electing rulers attributed to Moses by the Deuteronomist is highly significant: "Take you wise men, and understanding, and known, according to your tribes, and I will make them heads over you."<sup>102</sup> Joshua, also, is represented<sup>103</sup> as directing that an election be held to select three men from each tribe to inspect the promised land. For the office of "judge," Jephthah seems to have been elected by a popular vote.<sup>104</sup> These and similar instances that might be cited, indicate clearly enough that the polity of ancient Israel embodied the principle of representative government, and that it was, therefore, especially adapted to exert the strong influence that it undoubtedly has exerted in modern times upon the development of popular liberty.<sup>105</sup>

To the extent of this influence there is abundant testimony. "It is not without significance," wrote Edward Caird, "that the great struggle for politi-

*brews*, pp. 401 ff and Bacon, *History of Henry VII.*, p. 72.

<sup>102</sup> Deut. 1:13. The qualifications for holding office in ancient Israel were few and simple. They are given (Ex. 18:21) as follows: "Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth hating unjust gain." Noble birth was not one of the requisite qualifications.

<sup>103</sup> Josh. 18:4.

<sup>104</sup> Judges 11:4-6.

<sup>105</sup> See Wines' *Commentaries on the Laws of the Ancient Hebrews*, p. 337.

cal freedom in this country was led by men who drew much of their inspiration from the Old Testament, that sacred fountain of the spirit of nationality and national religion. . . . This free religious spirit is one of the main causes why England outstripped all other European countries in its political development, and became their teacher in the methods of free government.”<sup>106</sup>

The influence of the Holiness Code<sup>107</sup> was mostly indirect. It was never publicly ratified, and remained an example of theoretical legalism. Yet, because it gave expression to the national longing for popular holiness, it did exert a marked influence upon later codes. In them, ceremonial righteousness came to be more and more insisted on, both as a means of expiating past national sins, and of preventing future transgressions. How long the expansion of the priestly code continued, we do not precisely know. It certainly did not cease with the public ratification of it in the time of Nehemiah.<sup>108</sup> But by the middle of the third century B. C. when the translation of the Hebrew scriptures into Greek was made (The Septuagint), the canon of the law had been definitely closed.

The ultimate supremacy of the priests as leaders of religious thought in Israel marks the final

<sup>106</sup> The quotation is taken from Keeble, *The Social Teaching of the Bible*, p. 28.

<sup>107</sup> Lev. 17-26.

<sup>108</sup> Neh. 10.

stage in the development of the Jewish religion. So long as the religion of Israel had been, as the prophets taught, a life, it could, and did, change with the developing spiritual consciousness of the race; but when, after the final codification of the law, it became a book-religion, its further development was arrested. It ceased to be a life and became a doctrine, something to be taught and studied. Henceforth, no further progress was possible; nor was any attempted. The Jewish religion has remained practically unchanged since the returned exiles in the time of Nehemiah adopted the law brought by Ezra from Babylon. Its teachers have since occupied themselves with explaining it, and applying it to changing conditions; but the law itself has not changed, nor has the Jewish religion, of which it was the expression, altered in any essential way through all the succeeding centuries.<sup>109</sup>

Yet for the arrested development of the Jewish religion, the law has been blamed unjustly. There was in the law no inherent reason why, because of it, the religion of Israel should have become a book-religion, no longer a life, but a doctrine. On the contrary, the law, by being based upon the broad principle of mutual forbearance and love, was fitted to escape the ephemeralness characteristic of other legal systems, and to become capable of an almost infinite

<sup>109</sup> See Marti, *The Religion of the Old Testament*, pp. 184-188.

variety of applications to changing conditions. What, then, does account for the fact that the final codification of the law marks the end of the development of Hebrew religion? The answer is that the law was not observed intelligently. Because it was easier to observe strict rules than to apply moral principles to life, men became more concerned to fulfill the commands of the law relating to outward duty than to obey the injunctions concerning the inner life. This tendency resulted in a deplorable externalism. Righteousness came to be synonymous with obedience to a mass of precepts regarding the conduct of the outward life. The teachers of the law apparently did not lead the people to discriminate between the essentials and the non-essentials — between insignificant details of ceremonial cleanliness and the purity of heart that was essential to the kind of righteousness the law was really designed to promote.<sup>110</sup> It became just as important for a man not to transgress the limits of a Sabbath day's journey, which according to the Talmud must not exceed two thousand cubits from one's dwelling, as that a man should speak the truth. The commentators taught that he who broke one law was *ipso facto* guilty of having broken the whole code.<sup>111</sup> All the precepts, consequently, became equally binding and equally important.

<sup>110</sup> See Toy, *Judaism and Christianity*, pp. 242-243.

<sup>111</sup> "For whosoever shall keep the whole law and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." Jas. 2:10.

In the equalization of the claims of ceremonial godliness, social integrity, and purity of heart, we have, not only the explanation of the loss on the part of the Jews of a just sense of comparative ethical values, but the reason for the later treatment of the law by the scribes in the Talmud — the voluminous amplifications of the Mishna, and the casuistical commentary of the Gemara.

In this final treatment of the law, we find the simple Torah of the priests expanded into a system of complicated and burdensome ordinances. Take, for example, the law regarding the observance of the Sabbath. The old law had been content to enjoin rest, and had assigned a reason for observing it as a "holy" (separate) day. In the Talmud the simple command of the older law is buried beneath a mass of minute and trivial regulations. In the fifth number of the tractate dealing with Sabbath observance,<sup>112</sup> directions are given regarding the dress proper to the Sabbath. A man was forbidden to wear clothes that might become burdensome, because to carry a burden would be to break the Sabbath rest.<sup>113</sup> Hence he could not wear any ornament that could be taken off and carried in the hands, for in that

<sup>112</sup> The Sabbath tractate comes first of the twelve tractates, which together form the second of the six sections into which the Mishna of the Jerusalem Talmud is divided.

<sup>113</sup> This idea was based upon Ex. 36:6 in which the command of Moses that the people bring no more offerings for the Sanctuary is arbitrarily applied to the observance of the

case it would become a “burden.” A woman could not wear any ornaments, at least in the street, lest her vanity might prompt her to remove these ornaments, to show to her companions, and by carrying them in her hands, make them a “burden.” She might not wear false hair in the street, nor a pin in her dress, nor was she allowed to look in the mirror, lest seeing a white hair, she might be tempted to pull it out, which would be to break the Sabbath rest. A plaster might be worn to prevent a wound from growing worse, but not to heal it. False teeth could not be worn on the Sabbath, because of their liability to fall out, in which case they would have to be picked up and carried, and thus become a “burden.” If a man had worn cotton in his ears through the week, he might continue to wear it on the Sabbath, though if the wad of cotton fell out during the day, he might not replace it, for this would be “work.”<sup>114</sup> To such puerilities had the teaching of the Torah descended, to the neglect of the “weightier matters of the law.” Surely the leaders of the Israelitish thought needed to be reminded that the Sabbath was really “made for man, not man for the Sabbath.”<sup>115</sup>

Sabbath, and, also, upon Jer. 17:21, 22 in which the carrying of burdens on the Sabbath is prohibited.

<sup>114</sup> These details are excerpted from a summary of the fifth chapter of the tractate on the Sabbath given in Appendix XVII. of Edersheim's *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, pp. 781, 782.

<sup>115</sup> Mark 2:27.

## CHAPTER V

### THE DEBT OF ISRAEL AND THE WORLD TO HEBREW LAW

While it thus becomes apparent that the debt of the world at large to the post-canonical development of Jewish legalism is negligible, it is equally apparent that the extent of modern Israel's debt to it is considerable. It must not be overlooked that, in spite of the externalism fostered by the minute study of the law, the Jewish people owe, not only their characteristic definiteness of opinion and decision of conduct, but even their continued existence as a distinct race to their devotion to the Law. The extent of this devotion is unparalleled. Neither active persecution, nor social ostracism; neither national humiliation, nor political annihilation; nor centuries of obloquy, has been sufficient to shake the Jew's unalterable faith in the Torah as the inexorable law of righteousness, the categorical imperative of duty. The saying of the Talmud, "As a fish dies out of the water, so perishes a Jew, as soon as he quits the Torah," is still the belief of Israel. And the law, it must be admitted, has been a powerful antiseptic. It has kept the Jewish people immune from the contagion of idolatry, and it has protected them from

moral contamination. The ethical ideals and practice of the Jews throughout the dark ages were higher than those of the people among whom they lived. Moreover their devotion to the Law has preserved their racial existence. The little Jewish race would long since have disappeared, absorbed by stronger races (as, indeed, the ten tribes did disappear, assimilated by the oriental races among whom they settled after their deportation) had they not been upheld by a stronger racial consciousness developed during the post-exilic period through the growth of legalism. It was their adherence to the ideal of a "self-centered, well-balanced, intelligent, and strenuous moral-religious life" that both differentiated the Jews from others with whom they might otherwise have mingled, and at the same time protected them from the effects of a compulsory conformity which stronger peoples would fain have imposed upon them. Nothing but the will to live could have preserved the Jewish race amid oppression sufficient to have destroyed a people not upheld by a strong sense of its own racial individuality. It was the devotion of the race to a definite ideal embodied in its law that, by creating and sustaining its race consciousness, supplied the will to live.

The feeling of the pious Israelite towards the "law of Jehovah" is beautifully set forth in the one hundred and nineteenth Psalm—the great "Psalm of the Law." Here we find expressed the hope of later Israel to make God's law the govern-

## 136 OUR MODERN DEBT TO ISRAEL

ing principle of conduct, to surrender all self-willed thoughts and aims, to subordinate the whole life to the will of God as embodied in the Torah. The poem is especially noteworthy for its acknowledgment of the strength which the Law gives to Israel in the midst of surrounding heathenism, and to the faithful Israelite in the presence of prevailing laxity of faith and morals.

Forever, O Jehovah,  
Thy word is settled in heaven.

Thy faithfulness is unto all generations:  
Thou hast established the earth and it abideth.

They abide this day according to thine ordinances;  
For all things are thy servants.

Unless thy law had been my delight,  
I should have perished in mine affliction.

I will never forget thy precepts;  
For with them thou hast quickened me.

I am thine, save me;  
For I have sought thy precepts.

Not alone is Israel's obligation to the Law, for Christendom also owes to the legalists of Israel a debt almost incalculable. This debt to the priests has been hitherto immensely underestimated. People have supposed that, since the priests were ritualists, and because ritualists are more prone

to look backward than forward, that they were interested chiefly in the traditions of the past, and that they did not concern themselves with the future progress of the race. It has been thought that they were mostly occupied with the forms of worship, and that they cared very little about applying moral principles to life—that, indeed, they cared not at all about moral principles except so far as they were embodied in the Law. We have ignored the fact that, though the site of the Temple is now occupied by a mosque, and though the Law as a legal system is as obsolete as the laws of the Medes and Persians, the priests have bequeathed to us institutions that are still vital, ideals of conduct that are still inspiring, and conceptions of God and of man's duty toward him that have not been, and that never can be superseded.<sup>1</sup>

The most important of the modern institutions that go back for their origion to Israel's priests<sup>2</sup> is the church. There can be no question that the church as an organization is an offspring of Old Testament Judaism. Post-exilic Judaism, it will be remembered, was not a kingdom, but a church. The ruling power was not a monarchy, but a hierarchy. It was natural, therefore, that the early

<sup>1</sup> Some account of our debt to Israel's law may be found in my article in "The Biblical World" for July, 1912.

<sup>2</sup> A suggestive list of examples of these various forms of indebtedness is given in Harper's *Priestly Element in the Old Testament*, pp. 269, 270. From this list the following instances are borrowed.

Christians, most of whom were Jews, should have thought of themselves as continuing the old organization, and that they should have tried, so far as possible, to retain the distinctive characteristics of the old ecclesiastical order.<sup>3</sup> That the early church considered itself as made up of the ideal representatives of the true Israel, the spiritual descendants of the twelve sons of Jacob, is shown by the fact that the apostles, who formed the nucleus of it, were twelve in number, corresponding to the twelve tribes of the chosen people. That such was their thought is evidenced, also, by the fact that our modern church service of prayer, song, and exhortation comes directly from the Temple and synagogue service.<sup>4</sup> A Gentile visiting a modern synagogue cannot fail to be impressed with the similarity, so far as form is concerned, of the service to that of a Christian church. The explanation of the similarity lies in the common origin of both. The early Christians adapted the synagogue service to their uses by

<sup>3</sup> See Pressensé, *Early Years of Christianity*, pp. 46 ff.

<sup>4</sup> See Weizsäcker, *The Apostolic Age of the Christian Church*, Vol. II., pp. 246, 254, 258.

"It may with tolerable certainty be supposed that the Jewish Christians, particularly the congregation at Jerusalem, observed the whole ceremonial law with its weekly and yearly festivals, and did not renounce the cultus of the Old Testament theocracy till the destruction of Jerusalem in the year 70."

Schaff, *History of the Apostolic Church*, p. 546.

See, also, Fisher, *History of Christian Doctrine*, Part I., Period I., Chap. I.

introducing into it certain modifications, chief among which was, of course, the eucharist. Such a service among the early Christians is described by Justin Martyr in his *Apology for the Christians*, addressed to the Emperor Antoninus Pius, and written between 130 and 150 A. D. This passage seems worthy of quotation, both because it shows the close connection between the synagogue and the Christian church service, and because of its interest as the earliest extant account of a Christian religious exercise.

“ And on the day called Sunday, there is an assembly in one place of all who live in cities or in the country, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read so long as time permits; then, when the reader has ceased, the president gives the exhortation to the imitation of these good things. Then we all stand up together and offer prayer; and as we before said, when our prayer is ended, bread is brought, and wine and water, and the president in like manner sends up prayers and thanksgivings according to his ability, and the congregation assents, saying the Amen. And the participation of the things over which thanks have been given is to each one, and to those who are absent a portion is sent by the hands of the deacons. And they who are well-to-do and willing give each one as he wills, according to his discretion, and what is collected is deposited with the president, and he himself succors the orphans and the widows and those who

are in want through sickness or other cause, and those who are in bonds, and the strangers who are sojourning; and in a word takes care of all who are in need.”

It is not at all to be wondered at, considering the close affinity of this service to the regular synagogue exercises, that the apostle James applies<sup>5</sup> the name “synagogue” to the worshipping assemblies of the early Christians.

Another of our institutions that we owe to priestly influence is that of the Lord’s day, or Sunday, which is the offspring of the Jewish Sabbath. The early church, as was natural, in view of the fact that the most influential members of it were Jews, strictly observed the law regarding the observance of the Sabbath. Indeed, strict Sabbath observance continued in the Eastern church, perhaps because the proportion of Jews was greater in the East than in the West, till the fifth century. Even now the Christians of Abyssinia persist in the practice of Sabbath observance, together with certain other Jewish rites taught them by Jewish Christian missionaries of the Alexandrian church. Just when the observance of the Jewish Sabbath was transferred to Sunday, we do not precisely know. Justin, the church father of the second century, in his *Apology for the Christians*, speaks of the transfer as an accomplished fact, and justifies it on two grounds — first, that on Sunday God

<sup>5</sup> James 2:2.

created the world, and the light; and secondly, that on the first day of the week Christ rose from the dead. This explanation appealed to the religious feeling of Christendom to such a degree that it has ever since been universally regarded as the true reason for the change. We find it in modern Christian hymnology, as in the familiar hymn by Christopher Wordsworth, written in 1825, which contains these lines,

On thee at the Creation,  
The light first had its birth;  
On thee, for our salvation,  
Christ rose from depths of earth;

The first law either ecclesiastical or civil, enjoining the Sabbatical observance of Sunday was the edict of Constantine in 321 A. D. This famous edict prohibited all work on Sunday, except that of tilling the soil. After this, the tendencies toward Sabbatarianism (the identification of the Christian with the Jewish institution) developed rapidly. In 338 the third Council of Orleans recommended abstinence from agricultural labor on Sunday, "that the people might have more leisure to go to church and say their prayers." Such abstinence was expressly enjoined about the end of the ninth century by the Emperor Leo, "the Philosopher." By the legal establishment of Sunday as a Sabbath, the confusion of the Christian with the Jewish institution would seem to have been completed. But it was

reserved for the English Puritans to carry Sabbatharianism to its extreme limit, by adding to the observance of Sunday an austerity by which neither it nor the Sabbath keeping of the Jews had ever hitherto been marked. The Directory of Public Worship and the Confession of Faith as formulated by the Westminster Assembly, and approved by Parliament in 1646, not only enjoined abstinence from labor, but strictly prohibited recreation as a transgression of the fourth commandment.

Of the religious festivals bequeathed to us by the priests, the most important is Easter. The origin of this festival in the Passover feast is somewhat obscured for English speaking people<sup>6</sup> by the name, which is the Anglo-Saxon Eastr, and is a survival of the old Teutonic mythology. According to Bede the name is derived from Ostara, the Anglo-Saxon goddess of the spring, to whom the fourth month, called "Eostre moneth" was dedicated. A letter of Ceolfrid,<sup>7</sup> abbot of the monastery of Peter and Paul at Darrow, to the King of the Piets explains at considerable length the connection between the Passover and the Christian feast. "There are three rules in the sacred writings," he says, "on account of which

<sup>6</sup> The origin of the festival is much more apparent for other than English speaking peoples, for the Greek word Ηάσχα has passed directly into most modern languages. The French word is Pâques; the Scotch, Pusch; the Dutch, Paschen; the Danish, Panske.

<sup>7</sup> Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, Bk. V., Chap. 21.

it is not lawful for any human authority to change the time of keeping Easter . . . ; two whereof are divinely established in the law of Moses ; the third is added in the Gospel by means of the passion and resurrection of our Lord. . . . For that same night in which the people of Israel were delivered out of Egypt by the blood of the lamb is the very same in which all the people of God were by Christ's resurrection, delivered from eternal death. Then, on the morning of the Lord's day, they should celebrate the first day of the Paschal festival ; for that is the day on which our Lord, with much joy of pious revelation, made known the glory of his resurrection." In identifying the Easter festival as the Christian successor of the Passover, Ceolfrid merely stated what was true according to the common consent of Christendom all through the Christian centuries preceding. In the early centuries of the Christian era, all those in both the eastern and the western churches who believed the Christian Passover to be a commemoration of Christ's death, maintained the custom of holding the Easter festival on the day prescribed for the Jewish Passover, the fourteenth day of the first month, that is, the lunar month of which the fourteenth day either falls on, or next follows the vernal equinox. Not until the Council of Nice in 325 was the date of the festival finally settled for the whole church in opposition to the opinion of those who persisted that the date of the Jewish fixed that of the Christian festival.

Closely connected with the origin of Easter in the Passover feast is that of the eucharist. It was while eating the Passover that Jesus instituted the rite which, among his followers was to supersede the older feast.<sup>8</sup> In speaking of "my blood of the covenant which is shed for many," Jesus seems to have desired to connect this new rite with the old sacrificial feast in which the worshippers, by partaking of the sacrificial meal, partook also of the blessing which the sacrifice was to secure. The Lord's Supper is, therefore, a continuation of the Jewish Paschal feast.

In the apostolic period it was celebrated daily, at least in circumstances where daily worship was possible. Certainly such was the custom in the church at Jerusalem where the celebration of the Lord's Supper was the closing act of the daily social feast. As celebrated by the early Christians, the Lord's Supper, or "the breaking of bread," as they more frequently designated the rite, seems to have been a very simple and natural observance. In the Jerusalem church it was connected with the community of goods, the believers considering themselves as one household of faith, and was simply a part of the communal evening

<sup>8</sup> The Passover feast is now almost entirely obsolete. Since the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, when the Jews were gathered there to keep this feast, it has not been observed by the Hebrews, though the feast of unleavened bread which was a part of the Passover is still kept. It is said, however, that the colony of Samaritans still eat the Passover on Mount Gerizim.

meal. It was not preceded by any special religious exercises.<sup>9</sup> We are told that "day by day (*καθ' ἡμέραν*), continuing steadfastly with one accord in the Temple, and breaking bread at home, they took their food with gladness and singleness of heart. . . ."<sup>10</sup>

Another of the church's sacraments derived directly from the priest is baptism, the solemn ceremony of reception and incorporation into the communion of the visible church. In spite of some assertions to the contrary,<sup>11</sup> most scholars see in Christian baptism an adaptation of the baptism, which, with circumcision and sacrifice, accompanied the reception of Gentiles into the family of Israel.<sup>12</sup>

When the "stranger" wished to become a "child of the covenant," he had to fulfill three conditions. He must be circumcised; he must be baptized; he must offer a sacrifice. Of these three rites, baptism seems to have been regarded as most important.<sup>13</sup> According to the established

<sup>9</sup> The Protestant "preparatory lecture" finds its authorization in I Cor. 11:28.

<sup>10</sup> Acts 2:46.

<sup>11</sup> "Regarded from the apostolic point of view, baptism cannot be connected . . . with the baptism administered to proselytes to Judaism." Pressensé, *Early Years of Christianity*, p. 375.

<sup>12</sup> The first scholar to recognize this was Augusti in his *Manual of Christian Archaeology*, II., 326. This was published in 1836. He traced a complete parallel between Christian baptism and that of Jewish proselytes.

<sup>13</sup> In the case of female proselytes only baptism and the

custom in the baptism of proselytes, three of those who had instructed him in the law acted as his sponsors, and were called "the fathers of the baptism." Together they conducted him to a pool. While he stood naked, and up to his neck in the water, the great commandments of the law were read to him. To these he promised obedience; and a blessing was pronounced upon him. Then he plunged beneath the surface, being careful to be entirely submerged. Upon his coming out of the water, he was regarded as a new man in reference to his past; that, with its defilements, being looked upon as buried in the waters of baptism.

The link between baptism as a priestly ceremony and baptism as a Christian sacrament is furnished by John the Baptist. In his use of baptism, he was influenced in part by the customs of ceremonial washings enjoined by the law, and in part by the custom of baptizing proselytes. The main aspect of baptism as he employed it was as a preparation for the kingdom of God. It was a baptism of repentance; and was intended as a symbol of the desire on the part of those who received it to seek purification, like aliens who had lived in defilement, in order that they might obtain admission among the people who awaited the immediate realization of the ancient hope of Israel, -- the only hope that remained since the scepter sacrifice were obligatory; and after the destruction of the Temple, the latter was wholly dispensed with.

had departed from Judah, the hope of "the Kingdom."<sup>14</sup> From the baptism of repentance which enrolled the pious Israelite in the number of those who expected the realization of Israel's long deferred hope, to the Christian baptism as we find it on the Day of Pentecost is but a step. The latter was the solemn ceremony of reception into the communion of those who believed that in Jesus of Nazareth the hope of Israel had been fulfilled.

It is not institutionally, however, that we are most indebted to the priests. We owe to them certain conceptions of God and of what he requires of men which are as potent to-day as they were twenty-five hundred years ago. Chief among these conceptions is that of the holiness of God, an idea which is in its beginnings attributable to the prophets, but which was developed and emphasized by the priests. In their thought, holiness was the supreme attribute of God. The root idea in the word seems to be that of distance or separation; and hence it suggests, in the priestly use of it as an attribute of deity, the contrast between the divine and the human. It is undoubtedly true that in the early use of the word "holy," it did not, when applied either to God or to men, express a moral attribute, but rather as applied to God, the idea of majesty, and as applied to men

<sup>14</sup> For a slightly different interpretation of the significance of the baptism of John see Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus*, Vol. I., p. 274.

or things, the idea of belonging to God, or of being dedicated to him. Yet it is equally evident that the idea of holiness was progressively spiritualized till it came to be thought of more and more as a moral quality. Consequently, the phrase, "the Holy One," which originally had meant the lofty, the majestic one, who dwelt on high and was separated in space from men, gradually came to mean, the morally lofty one, separated in character from impure and sinful men.<sup>15</sup> Similarly, the word "holy" as applied to men changed its meaning to correspond to an enlarged and clarified conception of the character of God. Though it originally meant only belonging to God, or dedicated to him, thus expressing not a quality, but a relation, it gradually changed its meaning, as the loftier idea of Jehovah's character reacted on it, till it came to mean morally pure, ethically clean.

This holiness, in the sense of separation from sin, is, in the priestly thought, not only an attribute of God; it is also his one and constant demand of his people. They, too, are to be "holy." This means that they are to be in a proper physical condition to come into his holy place, and so like him in character as to be able to come into his spiritual presence. Ceremonial cleanliness and purity of heart are, then, what God demands of men. Again and again in the Torah is this de-

<sup>15</sup> See Davidson, *Theology of the Old Testament*, pp. 252 ff.

mand for a holiness in man to correspond to that of God reiterated.<sup>16</sup> The injunction, "Sanctify yourselves, therefore, and be ye holy, for I am holy," meant, separate yourselves from impurity — that which contaminates and degrades. This included, of course, abstinence from that which would cause ceremonial uncleanness, but it included, also, such moral purity as would fit a man to enter God's holy place.

Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?  
 And who shall stand in his holy place?  
 He that hath clean hands and a pure heart;  
 Who hath not lifted up his soul unto falsehood,  
 And hath not sworn deceitfully.  
 He shall receive a blessing from Jehovah,  
 And righteousness from the God of his salvation.<sup>17</sup>

Such separation from physical and moral impurity was to be secured by the keeping of the law.<sup>18</sup> Nor was this reverent regard for the law as a means of acquiring holiness wholly unreasonable, considering to what extent the Levitical codes dealt with the subject of moral purity. Such injunctions as "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart,"<sup>19</sup> and "Thou shalt not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people; but thou shalt love thy

<sup>16</sup> Lev. 11:44; 19:2; 20:26. Cf., also, 20:7; 21:6-8.

<sup>17</sup> Ps. 24:3-5. See, also, Ps. 15:1-5.

<sup>18</sup> In Num. 15:40 the keeping of the law is recommended as a means of acquiring holiness.

<sup>19</sup> Lev. 19:17.

neighbor as thyself,"<sup>20</sup> clearly show that the law was not what it has sometimes been supposed, a mass of arbitrary formalism, but that it set up a standard of kindness, and of stainless probity such as no other legislator ever thought of doing.

Strange indeed have been the mis-statements which have been made regarding the Hebrew law by writers who have been misled by a failure to recognize that the law was more than "a mass of prescriptions . . . an attempt to define all the beliefs and acts of life,"<sup>21</sup> that as a matter of fact it did attempt to "supply the motive of conduct,"<sup>22</sup> and that the motive it supplied in the command "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" was lofty enough to satisfy one who announced that He came, not to destroy, but to complete the law.<sup>23</sup>

Because Hebrew law was a law of kindness; because it was based, not upon a recognition of the rights of men, but of their duties; and because it depended for its sanction upon the appeal that it

<sup>20</sup> Lev. 19:18.

<sup>21</sup> Toy, *Judaism and Christianity*, p. 239. In the same volume, p. 227, we find this assertion, "Of inward sins, transgressions of the law of purity and love, which belong to the heart, nothing is said; this was a domain which the national legislation did not undertake to enter."

<sup>22</sup> "The law does not in itself supply the motive of conduct,—tends, indeed, by emphasizing the outward standard, to attract the will from that inward love and devotion which is the mainspring of the moral-religious life." Toy, *Judaism and Christianity*, p. 240.

<sup>23</sup> The word translated fulfill ( $\pi\lambda\eta\rho\omega\sigma\alpha\iota$ ), Matt. 5:17, really means to complete, or fill out.

made to the conscience of the citizen ; it possessed a timelessness of appeal that accounts for its influence upon the religious institutions, and in general, upon the religious thought of our modern life.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE SAGES

The arrangement of the literature in our Bibles is somewhat misleading in that it does not, like the arrangement made by the Hebrews themselves, reflect their estimate of the relative religious value of the three departments into which they divided it. These three departments or groups were, first, the law, including not merely the Torah, or *corpus juris* of the race, but the historical books written by the priests or under priestly influence; secondly, the prophets, and including not only the major and minor prophets, but the prophetic histories as well; and, thirdly, the "writings" (K'thubim) which included the remainder of the canonical books of the Old Testament. Most sacred, as the source of the national character and worship, and therefore, coming first in the arrangement of the books of the Hebrew canon, was the law. Second in reverential regard, and, consequently, occupying the second or middle place in the Hebrew scriptures, came the prophets; while the "writings" about the canonicity, or religious value, of some of which there was prolonged and bitter controversy, occupied the third

place in the regard of the Hebrew people, and likewise the third place in the sequence. That such an arrangement accurately reflected the popular estimate of the relative ethical worth of the three groups is attested by the fact that in the Jewish schools of the first century A. D. the pupils in their study of the scriptures proceeded from the book of Leviticus to the rest of the Pentateuch, thence to the Prophets, and lastly to the Hagiographa.<sup>1</sup> This Hebrew method of classifying their literature reflected, not alone the popular estimate of the ethical worth of the three groups, but not less accurately the gradual development of a sense of the value of individual life and character.

With the individual neither the priests nor the prophets had been much concerned. As the religious code of the nation, the law had to do with the individual chiefly as a member of a social and religious organism. Though the individual was regarded as an inseparable part of the community, no question of individual or private right as against the community could arise, for the supreme duty of each citizen was to love God and his brother. The law-givers of Israel, recognizing the truth that righteousness exalteth a nation, but

<sup>1</sup> See Edersheim, *Sketches of Jewish Social Life in the Days of Christ*, p. 136. Further proof is afforded by Luke 24:44, and by the prologue to the apocryphal book of Ecclesiasticus.

that sin is a reproach to any people, were concerned chiefly that Israel should become so holy a nation that in the midst of it Jehovah himself might be content to dwell. The individual was to find his salvation in duly fulfilling his place in the civic, social, and political life of his people—a people that should belong wholly to Jehovah.<sup>2</sup> Nor did prophecy, for the most part, recognize the individual, except as a component part of the state. Certainly all the prophets of the eighth century were preachers, not to the individual conscience, but to the nation. Jeremiah of the seventh century was the first to consider the relations of the individual man to God. Up to his time, the sense of individual responsibility had not emerged; but in the thirty-first chapter of Jeremiah the prophet clearly shows that he looked forward to a Messianic age in which Jehovah would have direct relations with every individual Israelite.<sup>3</sup> Even after the time of Jeremiah, the sense of the responsibility of the individual developed slowly. To the slowness of this development must be attributed the late appearance of the hope of individual immortality. It was Israel and not the Israelite who was immortal, because the Israelite was ab-

<sup>2</sup> The principle of individual responsibility, to be sure, does find expression in Deuteronomy (See Deut. 24:16), which was written, it is to be noted, under the influence of the prophets.

<sup>3</sup> See Montefiore, *The Hibbert Lectures*, 1892, pp. 221, 222. The formulation of the sense of individual moral responsibility is found, also, in Ezekiel (See Ezek. 18:2-4).

sorbed in the nation.<sup>4</sup> It is in the work of the wise men that the sense of individual responsibility finds full expression, for it was they who emphasized the supreme importance of individual character. Nothing on earth was, the sages held, worth an instant's worry except the momentous question what a man is. It is not, they believed, what a man has, nor even what he does, that really exalts or degrades him, but only what, behind the possession and beneath the overt act, the man in the light of his own conscience sees himself to be. The purpose underlying all the teaching of the wise was the upbuilding of personal character, the promotion of individual righteousness. In distinction from the priests, who were the ritualists, and from the prophets, who were the idealists of Israel, the sages were Israel's moral philosophers.

That the sages, or "the Wise," were recognized at least in later Israel, as constituting a special class co-ordinate with the priests and the prophets, and clearly differentiated from them, is indicated by a passage in Jeremiah, and by a similar one in Ezekiel.<sup>5</sup> In the former we read, "for the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet"; and in the latter, "Mischief shall come upon mischief, and rumour shall be upon rumour; and they shall seek a vision of the prophet; but the law shall

<sup>4</sup> See Addis, *Hebrew Religion*, pp. 115, 116, and G. A. Smith, *Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament*, pp. 291, 292.

<sup>5</sup> Jer. 18:18 and Ezek. 7:26.

perish from the priest, and counsel from the ancients." As a class, the sages seem to have attained to influence only after the Exile, when prophecy became gradually silent and finally ceased. Perhaps because the prophets saw that the sages were destined to supersede them, they did not look upon the boasted wisdom of the wise with favor. On the contrary, they charge them with conceit and immorality. "Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes," cries Isaiah, "and prudent in their own sight," and again he predicts that, "the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid."<sup>6</sup> Jeremiah is equally denunciatory. "The wise men," he says,<sup>7</sup> "are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken: lo, they have rejected the word of the Lord; and what manner of wisdom is in them?"

The dislike of the prophets for the sages seems not to have been returned in kind. The wise man speaks respectfully of prophecy. "Where there is no vision," he says,<sup>8</sup> "the people cast off restraint." Persistently the sages reaffirmed at least one of the characteristic ideas of prophecy — that ceremonial is a poor substitute

<sup>6</sup> Is. 5:21, and 29:14.

<sup>7</sup> Jer. 8:9. See, also, Jer. 4:22 and 9:23.

Yet the prophets' manner of expression was, nevertheless, obviously influenced by the style of the sages. Examples are: Is. 28:23-29; 29:24; 33:11. See, also, Cheyne, *Job and Solomon*, pp. 121 ff.

<sup>8</sup> Prov. 29:18.

for righteousness of life, asserting that "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord: but the prayer of the upright is his delight." <sup>9</sup> With the idealism of the prophets, however, they had little sympathy. They say nothing of a future golden age, and seem never to have shared with the prophets the hope of a kingdom of God on earth. Their general attitude of suspicion toward both the religious idealism and the political radicalism of the prophets is clearly suggested by the advice they give to the young man seeking wisdom: "My son, fear thou the Lord and the king: and meddle not with them that are given to change." <sup>10</sup>

With the priests, the sages had much more in common — their political conservatism, and their respect for legal precedent. Their friendly relations with the priests are to be accounted for by the probability that, as a class of religious teachers, the wisdom school developed from among the priests, the guardians of the law. Now the law had two sides — the ritual or liturgical, and the civil or moral side. In post-exilic times, the priests became identified with the ritual law, while the study of the law on its moral side became the province of the sages. Though the sages soon emancipated themselves from the limitations of the Hebrew law, expanding their outlook, partly under Greek influence, to include universal moral

<sup>9</sup> Prov. 15:8. See, also, Prov. 21:3, 27; and 16:6.

<sup>10</sup> Prov. 24:21.

## 158 OUR MODERN DEBT TO ISRAEL

truth, they certainly started with the assumption that the law is the way that leads to God. Practical ethics, consequently, became their principal field.

The aim and function of the sage is clearly set forth in the apocryphal book of Ecclesiasticus.<sup>11</sup> Here we are told: “ He will seek out the wisdom of all the ancients, and will be occupied in prophecies. He will keep the discourse of the men of renown, and will enter in amidst the subtleties of parables. He will seek out the hidden meaning of proverbs, and be conversant with the dark sayings of parables. He will serve among great men, and appear before him that ruleth: he will travel through the land of strange nations, for he hath tried good things and evil among men. He will apply his heart to resort early to the Lord that made him, and will make supplication before the Most High, he will open his mouth in prayer, and make supplication for his sins. If the great Lord will, he shall be filled with the spirit of understanding: he shall pour forth the words of his wisdom, and in prayer give thanks unto the Lord. He shall direct his counsel and knowledge, and in his secrets shall he meditate. He shall shew forth the instruction that he hath been taught, and shall glory in the law of the covenant of the Lord. Many shall commend his understanding; and so long as the world endureth, it shall not be blotted out: his memorial shall not depart, and his name

<sup>11</sup> Ecclus. 39:1-11.

shall live from generation to generation. Nations shall declare his wisdom, and the congregation shall tell out his praise. If he continue, he shall leave a greater name than a thousand: and if he die, he addeth thereto."

Though we know very little about the personality or methods of work of the sages, we infer that they corresponded fairly well to the description of a scholar that Doctor Johnson put into the mouth of Imlac. "To talk in public, to think in solitude, to read and to hear, to inquire and to answer inquiries, is the business of a scholar."<sup>12</sup> There was nothing academic about the Hebrew sage; he was a popular teacher of practical morality. The wise seem, like the earlier prophets, to have received fees for their services. "Wherefore," asks one of them,<sup>13</sup> "is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he hath no heart to it?" The Book of Ecclesiasticus ends with an address to the student of wisdom that implies an investment of money as well as of effort.

Put your neck under the yoke,  
And let your soul receive instruction:  
She is hard at hand to find.  
Behold with your eyes,  
How that I laboured but a little,  
And found for myself much rest.  
Get your instruction with a great sum of silver,  
And gain much gold by her.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> *Rasselas*, Chap. 8. <sup>13</sup> Prov. 17:16. <sup>14</sup> Ecclus. 51:26 ff.

Whether the sages exercised a kind of professional function in Israel, giving examinations and conferring degrees; whether, like the later rabbis, they occupied an honored official position in the educational life of the nation, we have no means of knowing. That they constituted an influential class, co-ordinate in popular estimation with the prophets and the priests is, however, clearly evident.<sup>15</sup> They taught at first orally, rather than through the written word. When they wrote, they did so sometimes anonymously, more often under a pseudonym—generally that of Solomon;<sup>16</sup> and always their utterances, whether oral or written, were of things that, to use Bacon's phrase, "come home to men's business and bosoms."<sup>17</sup> Like Bacon's Essays, again, "They handle those things wherein both men's lives and their persons are most conversant . . . not vulgar, but of a nature whereof a man shall find much in experience and little in books."<sup>18</sup>

Our English word "wisdom" is but an inadequate rendering of the Hebrew word *khokmah*. The root meaning of this word is to fasten or hold fast, and it includes much more than our word

<sup>15</sup> Jer. 18:18.

<sup>16</sup> Solomon became identified with the wisdom literature in exactly the same way as Moses did with the legal literature, and as David did with the lyric poetry; so that the phrase "a proverb of Solomon" came to mean merely "a wise proverb."

<sup>17</sup> "Epistle Dedicatory" to edition of 1625.

<sup>18</sup> Bacon, "To the Prince of Wales."

wisdom or its synonyms, prudence, sagacity, knowledge, learning. The Septuagint word *σοφία* fairly well translates it, for this is a word of varied meaning representing not only erudition, but skill in matters of common life, sound judgment in practical affairs, political sagacity. The Greek adjective *σόφος* (wise) was applied to a man who excelled his fellows in any kind of skill, either intellectual or manual. Thus the designation might be applied to a philosopher or to a hedger and ditcher with equal propriety, for it implied only an insight into the facts of life and a mastery of them. Now this was exactly what Hebrew wisdom, regarded as a human quality, also implied. Wisdom in the Hebrew view was to understand God's works and ways, and to turn one's knowledge of them to practical account. "The fact that practical ethics ultimately appropriated the technical name of wisdom ought not to blind us," says Professor Cheyne,<sup>19</sup> "to the larger connotation of the same word, which throws so much light on the deeply religious view of life prevalent among the Israelites." God "maketh wisdom abundant as Pishon, and as Tigris in the days of new fruits; that maketh understanding full as Euphrates, and as Jordan in the days of harvest," says Jesus Ben Sirach,<sup>20</sup> so all-inclusive is it. Wisdom "is an unspotted mirror of the workings of God" and "reacheth from one end of the world to the other

<sup>19</sup> *Job and Solomon*, p. 118.

<sup>20</sup> Ecclus. 24:25, 26.

with full strength, and ordereth all things graciously.”<sup>21</sup> She is the friend of the king on the throne,<sup>22</sup> and of the workman at his bench.<sup>23</sup> How to govern a state, or a household,<sup>24</sup> and how to manage a farm;<sup>25</sup> how to behave in the presence of a ruler,<sup>26</sup> and how to treat a fool;<sup>27</sup> all are matters that come within the scope of wisdom. It included, also, what we should call natural science. Of Solomon, who was regarded as the representative and embodiment of wisdom, it was said:<sup>28</sup> “he spake of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes.” All the works of the visible creation were regarded as objects of reverent study as revelations of the divine wisdom. “O Lord, how manifold are thy works!” cried the Psalmist,<sup>29</sup> “in wisdom hast thou made them all.” By the observation of these “works” men were to understand God’s ways, for God was in their thought the sourcee of all wisdom. In the ardent panegyric upon wisdom found in Proverbs, we are told:

The Lord by wisdom founded the earth;  
By understanding he established the heavens.  
By his knowledge the depths were broken up,  
And the skies drop down the dew.

<sup>21</sup> The Wisdom of Solomon, 7:26 and 8:1.

<sup>22</sup> Prov. 8:15, 16.

<sup>23</sup> Ex. 31:2 6; 1 Kings 7:13, 14.

<sup>24</sup> Prov. 31:10 ff.

<sup>25</sup> Prov. 10:4, 5.

<sup>26</sup> Prov. 25:6, 7.

<sup>27</sup> Prov. 26:4, 5.

<sup>28</sup> I Kings 4:33.

<sup>29</sup> Ps. 104:24.

My son, let not them depart from thine eyes;  
Keep sound wisdom and discretion:  
So shall they be life unto thy soul,  
And grace to thy neck.<sup>30</sup>

By observation of even the humblest of God's creatures men might learn wisdom,

Go to the ant, thou sluggard;  
Consider her ways, and be wise:  
Which having no chief,  
Overseer, or ruler,  
Provideth her meat in the summer,  
And gathereth her food in the harvest.<sup>31</sup>

Yet, while wisdom included within its range all God's creation, the department of study that offered the largest return of wisdom was human conduct. It was in the sphere of practical ethics that the sages mostly worked. Enlightened worldly wisdom, dealing with the results of an observation of human life, extended if not minute, was characteristic of Hebrew wisdom. It was never broadly speculative. The sage never, like the modern philosopher, started with a question. It never occurred to him to ask Who is God? Rather, he started with an axiom — given a God knowable, just and wise, then wisdom is to know Him, so far as possible through observation of His works and ways, and to turn that knowledge to practical account in our relations with Him, and with our fellow men. To these practical philoso-

<sup>30</sup> Prov. 3:19-22.

<sup>31</sup> Prov. 6:6-8.

phers, no less than to Pope, the proper study of mankind was man — and man in his social relations. Wisdom's call was to man considered as a member of a community, never to man as an isolated individual.

Doth not wisdom cry,  
 And understanding put forth her voice?  
 In the top of high places by the way,  
 Where the paths meet, she standeth;  
 Beside the gates, at the entry of the city,  
 At the coming in at the doors, she crieth aloud:  
 Unto you, O men, I call;  
 And my voice is to the sons of men.<sup>32</sup>

To harmonize human life with nature by constantly connecting both with God, was the end and aim of Hebrew wisdom.<sup>33</sup>

Closely connected with this quality of inclusiveness in Hebrew wisdom is what one might call its cosmopolitanism. Wisdom is of all Hebrew literature least distinctively Hebraic. Though belonging mostly to the period of legalism, when the law was revered as the inerrant guide of life, there is in all the wisdom books no mention of Sabbath, nor synagogue, nor circumcision.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, wisdom is the only department of Hebrew thought that was recognized as having any analog-

<sup>32</sup> Prov. 8:1-4.

<sup>33</sup> See Horton, "Proverbs" (*Expositor's Bible*) pp. 13, 14.

<sup>34</sup> Sacrifice is, however, referred to Prov. 15:8; Eccles. 34:18-20; Eccles. 5:1. Tithes are mentioned in Prov. 3:9; vows in Eccles. 5:4.

gies or connection with the world outside of Palestine. Of the centers of wisdom outside Israel, Egypt,<sup>35</sup> Edom,<sup>36</sup> and Tyre<sup>37</sup> seem to have been regarded as the most important. Just how much relation there was with these foreign centers of wisdom we have no means of knowing. The author of the apocryphal book of Baruch denies that Hebrew wisdom was like that of other kindred peoples,<sup>38</sup> but probably, as Cheyne suggests,<sup>39</sup> this denial represents the intolerant spirit of Maccabean Judaism. Certain it is that so unlimited by racial interests are some of the wisdom books, so universal in their appeal, that at least one of them has been thought by some not to have been written by a Hebrew at all.<sup>40</sup> Nor is it without significance that Job himself lived, not in Judea, nor even in Palestine, but in Uz, on the border of the great plains eastward of that country. Eliphaz, the eldest of the three friends that came to condole with Job, and their leader and spokesman, came from Teman in the land of Edom. It is entirely consonant with the universality generally characteristic of the wisdom books that in Job and Ecclesiastes the word Elohim or Eloah is usually substituted for the distinctively Hebraic name

<sup>35</sup> I Kings 4:30.

<sup>36</sup> Ob. 8; Jer. 49:7.

<sup>37</sup> Ezek. 28:2, 3.

<sup>38</sup> Baruch 3:22, 23.

<sup>39</sup> *Job and Solomon*, p. 118.

<sup>40</sup> See Carlyle's remarks on the authorship of Job in the "Hero as Prophet."

Jahveh. The former are names more general in their application, and might be applied to any foreign deity.

It would be strange indeed, in view of the cosmopolitanism of Hebrew wisdom, if there were no traces of foreign influence upon it. As a matter of fact the influence of foreign wisdom cults is quite apparent. One sees it even in Proverbs, the earliest of the wisdom books. The personification of wisdom in the eighth chapter, in which the divine wisdom is represented as a separate existence outside of Jehovah, is thoroughly un-Hebraic, and is entirely inconsistent with the stern monotheism of Israel's creed, which had become firmly established since the time of the popular endorsement of the book of Deuteronomy. Such an inconsistency can be explained only as a result of the influence of Greek philosophy. According to the Stoics, the powers of the divine essence diffused throughout the world (the *κοινὴ ἔργα*), are regarded as having a separate existence of their own. Only under the influence of such an idea, could the personification of God's wisdom find a place in the religious thought of a people whose fundamental belief was expressed in the unequivocal statement, "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord."<sup>41</sup> In the later books of wisdom, the influence of Greek philosophy is still more apparent. Ecclesiastes, to be sure, though formerly thought to show the effect of the Stoic

<sup>41</sup> Deut. 6:4.

and Epicurean philosophy, appears now,<sup>42</sup> in the light of recent discoveries of Babylonian inscriptions,<sup>43</sup> to have been written under foreign Semitic influence. We know that the Jewish colony in Babylon called the Gouliouth was extremely influential in post-Exilic times. That, through it, Babylonian culture should have affected Hebrew thought seems entirely possible; and, since the old Babylonian philosophy contained all that was formerly considered Greek in Ecclesiastes, it seems entirely probable that the foreign elements in the book are in origin Semitic rather than Aryan. Not so are the foreign elements in The Wisdom of Solomon. Here we find a number of characteristically Greek ideas, as, for example, the Stoic notion of wisdom as the all-pervading power, which is thus expressed:

For she that is the artificer of all things taught me,  
even wisdom.

For there is in her a spirit quiek of understanding,  
holy,

Alone in kind, manifold,

Subtile, freely moving.

Clear in utterance, unpolluted,

Distinct, unharmed,

Loving what is good, keen, unhindered,

<sup>42</sup> "The book of Ecclesiastes represents an original development of Hebrew thought, thoroughly Semitic in its point of view, and quite independent of Greek influences." Barton, "Ecclesiastes" (*International Critical Commentary*), p. 43.

<sup>43</sup> This is a fragment of the "Gilgamesh Epic," written about 2000 B. C.

Beneficent, loving toward man,  
 Stedfast, sure, free from care,  
 All-powerful, all-surveying,  
 And penetrating through all spirits  
 That are quick of understanding, pure, most subtile:  
 For wisdom is more mobile than any motion;  
 Yea, she pervadeth and penetrateth all things by rea-  
 son of her pureness.<sup>44</sup>

Several of the ideas in this book are evidently Platonic, as, for example, that of primitive amorphous matter,

For thine all-powerful hand,  
 That created the world out of formless matter,<sup>45</sup>  
 that of the pre-existence of the soul,  
 Now I was a child of parts, and a good soul fell to  
 my lot;<sup>46</sup>  
 and that of the four cardinal virtues,  
 The fruits of wisdom are virtues,  
 For she teacheth soberness and understanding, right-  
 eousness and courage.<sup>47</sup>

In view of these relations, it appears that Hebrew wisdom was a product neither wholly of Hebrew nor even of Semitic thought, nor designed solely for the Hebrew race, but that it was not lim-

<sup>44</sup> *The Wisdom of Solomon*, 7:22-24.

<sup>45</sup> *The Wisdom of Solomon*, 11:17.

<sup>46</sup> *The Wisdom of Solomon*, 8:19.

<sup>47</sup> *The Wisdom of Solomon*, 8:7.

ited by nationality, nor theology, nor forms of worship.

Yet, although Hebrew wisdom assimilated foreign influences, the sages were unquestionably justified in maintaining that their wisdom was distinctively Hebraic. The most striking assertion of this truth appears in the form of a soliloquy put into the mouth of Wisdom. It is found in the Book of Ecclesiasticus,<sup>48</sup> and is as follows:

I came forth from the mouth of the Most High,  
And covered the earth as a mist.  
I dwelt in high places,  
And my throne is in the pillar of the cloud.  
Alone I compassed the circuit of heaven,  
And walked in the depth of the abyss.  
In the waves of the sea, and in all the earth,  
And in every people and nation, I got a possession.  
With all these I sought rest;  
And in whose inheritance shall I lodge?  
Then the Creator of all things gave me a commandment;  
And he that created me made my tabernacle to rest,  
And said, Let thy tabernacle be in Jacob,  
And thine inheritance in Israel.  
He created me from the beginning before the world;  
And to the end I shall not fail.  
In the holy tabernacle I ministered before him;  
And so was I established in Sion.

Now in what consisted the uniqueness of this

<sup>48</sup> Ecclus. 24:3-10.

## 170 OUR MODERN DEBT TO ISRAEL

wisdom that was "established in Sion?" How did it differ from the wisdom that was established in Memphis, or Babylon, or that which was established in Athens? From all these it differed fundamentally, in that it was practical in its aims—in that it was enlightened worldly wisdom, a kind of inspired common sense. Pharaoh's wise men were interested in the occult, in the portents of dreams, and in divination. The stories of Joseph, who became an expert interpreter of dream oracles, and who, after his marriage to the daughter of the priest of On, practiced water-divination,<sup>49</sup> illustrates the Egyptian sages' interest in the esoteric. No less pretentious was the boasted wisdom of Chaldea's seers. They were astrologers and magicians, who sought the hidden meanings of things in the stars, and who would have despised the wisdom that the Hebrews prized—the wisdom of the commonplace and the familiar.

From the modern scientific spirit, Hebrew wisdom differed no less essentially in that it recognized invariably the divine origin of all true wisdom. In the mind of the Hebrew sage there could be no conflict between science and religion, because to him all knowledge had its source in God. Reason and revelation were not to him mutually opposed, nor subversive one of the other. To the sages, wisdom meant the well trained mind, the disciplined will, the skilled hand, working together for the end of living a sane and normal life. For

<sup>49</sup> Gen. 41:45; 44:15.

entering upon such a course of self-discipline, the one condition was humility.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge:  
But the foolish despise wisdom and instruction.

Such was the announcement at the very beginning of the first of the wisdom books of the Old Testament.<sup>50</sup> It strikes the key-note of all the wisdom teaching. As humility is the beginning of wisdom, so the end is reverence for God as the source of and giver of all understanding.<sup>51</sup> Wisdom was regarded as the gift of God, bestowed upon only those who pleased Him. "For to the man that pleaseth him," says the author of Ecclesiastes, "God giveth wisdom, and knowledge, and joy."<sup>52</sup> It was given in answer to prayer, as to Solomon;<sup>53</sup> and never, except as a reward for diligent effort. The searcher after wisdom must "apply his heart," must "seek her as silver." In Proverbs<sup>54</sup> we read:

My son, if thou wilt receive my words,  
And lay up my commandments with thee;  
So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom,  
And apply thine heart to understanding;

<sup>50</sup> Prov. 1:7; cf. Prov. 9:10; 14:27; 16:17; 24:5, and Ps. 111:10.

<sup>51</sup> "This is the end of the matter; . . . fear God, and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man." Eccles. 12:13.

<sup>52</sup> Eccles. 2:26. Cf. Prov. 2:6 and Dan. 2:21.

<sup>53</sup> I Kings 3:9.

<sup>54</sup> Prov. 2:1-5.

Yea, if thou ery after discernment,  
 And lift up thy voice for understanding;  
 If thou seek her as silver,  
 And search for her as for hid treasures;  
 Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord,  
 And find the knowledge of God.

The unaided search for wisdom is always unavailing. She never reveals herself except to the humble and diligent seeker. He who seeks her must be, she insists,

Watching daily at my gates,  
 Waiting at the posts of my doors.<sup>55</sup>

By searchers less in earnest, wisdom is not “found in the land of the living.” Only “God understandeth the way thereof,” and reveals it to whom He will.

But where shall wisdom be found?  
 And where is the place of understanding?  
 Man knoweth not the price thereof;  
 Neither is it found in the land of the living.

God understandeth the way thereof,  
 And he knoweth the place thereof.

Then did he see it, and declare it;  
 He established it, yea, and searched it out.  
 And unto man he said,  
 Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom;  
 And to depart from evil is understanding.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>55</sup> Prov. 8:34; cf. 8:17.

<sup>56</sup> Job 28:12, 13, 23, 27.

Yet in the quest for wisdom, man was not left wholly without guidance. There was the sage, who taught how to master the secrets, to fulfil the duties, and meet the temptations of life. A picture of such a sage Job gives us, as he recalls what he was "When the friendship of God was upon" his "tent."

When I went forth to the gate unto the city,  
When I prepared my seat in the broad place,  
The young men saw me and hid themselves,  
And the aged rose up and stood;  
The princes refrained talking,  
And laid their hand on their mouth;  
The voice of the nobles was hushed,  
And their tongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth.  
For when the ear heard me, then it blessed me;  
And when the eye saw me, it gave witness unto me:  
I put on righteousness, and it clothed me:  
My justice was as a robe and a diadem.<sup>57</sup>

Moreover, there was the law, which seems to have been regarded as of the highest disciplinary value. "Whoso keepeth the law," they said, "is a wise son."<sup>58</sup> The law was apparently looked upon as a kind of fingerpost to point men from evil to righteousness, and from folly to understanding.

When wisdom changed from the oral to the written form, it adopted as its characteristic liter-

<sup>57</sup> Job 29:7-11, 14; cf. Eccles. 12:9, 10.

<sup>58</sup> Prov. 28:7; cf. Deut. 4:6.

ary mold what the Hebrews called the *Mashal*. Though the word is usually translated “proverb,” the *mashal* was something more than merely an adage, or short, pithy saying. The root-meaning of the word is a likeness, or comparison, or similitude. The word came to have the rather comprehensive meaning that it did from the fact that the wisdom teachers taught so largely by analogy. In its simplest form, as we find it represented in the oldest part of the book of Proverbs,<sup>59</sup> we find it to consist of a single couplet, or epigram of two lines. The parallelism is prevailingly antithetic, like,

A wise son maketh a glad father:  
But a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother.

When we examine these epigrams, we see at once that they are not the rough-hewn proverbial sayings of the country folk, but that they have the artistic finish of the literary epigram. In their polished form they remind us less of the popular maxim of the man in the street than of the pointed aphorisms of Pope’s glittering couplets. And as Pope’s smooth couplets are built, like glazed tiles, into the ordered structure of his completed poems, so these isolated *mashals* on a single topic are grouped sometimes into what most resembles the

<sup>59</sup> Prov. 10-22:16.

The synthetic parallelism (expressive of a comparison) and the synonymous (expressive of a simple iteration) are also represented in this group.

Baconian essay, or the sonnet. Such expansions of the couplet into something analogous to the sonnet we find in what Professor Moulton calls a "Folk song of good husbandry":

Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks,  
And look well to thy herds:  
For riches are not forever;  
And doth the crown endure unto all generations?  
The hay is carried, and the tender grass sheweth  
itself,  
And the herbs of the mountains are gathered in.  
The lambs are for thy clothing,  
And the goats are the price of the field:  
And there will be goats' milk enough for thy food,  
For the food of thy household;  
And maintenance of thy maidens.<sup>60</sup>

From this, and from still freer expansions of the proverb distich, such as the elaborately symbolic description of old age in the last chapter of Ecclesiastes,<sup>61</sup> we see that the mashal was, like the Spenserian stanza in English poetry, especially suited to description. As Professor Genung says,<sup>62</sup> "It is an instrument of moving and trenchant portrayal, wherein concrete images flash and glitter and burn themselves into the mind." This descriptive quality the mashal always retained. Even when the sages dealt with problems which would have been treated by Western philosophers

<sup>60</sup> Prov. 27:23-27. See, also, Prov. 31:10-31.

<sup>61</sup> Eccles. 12:1-8.

<sup>62</sup> *Hebrew Literature of Wisdom*, p. 82.

as purely speculative, they still adhered to the method of picturing concretely the materials of the discussion. Even in the book of Job, for example, which is a presentation of the world-old question, "Is the world governed justly?", the method pursued by the author is wholly descriptive. The book is a succession of splendid descriptions. Job is first described in his prosperity; and then, after the intervening description of the celestial council, in his adversity. The friends argue wholly by a series of graphic portrayals of the power and gentleness of God that He cannot but do justly and mercifully; and then, also by a series of pictures of the fate of the wicked and of the contrasting prosperity of the righteous, that all suffering is caused by sin. Similarly the voice of God out of the whirlwind, by the portrayal of a world luminous with God, in which the evil is no more mysterious than the good, closes the discussion. Finally, in the epilogue, Job's restoration to prosperity is described, as a fitting close to a book in which an abstruse question is solved solely by means of narrative description.

## CHAPTER VII

### OUR MODERN DEBT TO THE SAGES

An attempt to formulate with any degree of exactness the extent of our modern debt to Israel's sages is extremely difficult. Their influence, unlike that of the priests, has not left its impress upon our institutions; and, unlike that of the prophets, has not much affected our religious concepts, but must be traced in those ideals of temperance, chastity, industry, and duty to one's fellows which make up our current notions of what constitutes manly character.

What the Hebrew ideal of manly character was is clearly shown in Job's autobiographic character sketch. The setting of the picture adds to its impressiveness. The long and inconclusive debate has ended. The three friends have contributed to the discussion their shallow argument to prove that all suffering is caused by sin. And Job has silenced them by bringing their argument to the test of life, and showing that their contention is inconsistent with the patent facts of life. Then Job sums up the whole case, and answers the baseless charges against his moral character which the friends, in their attempt to account for the severity of his sufferings, have made. No picture in an-

cient tragedy, not even that of Prometheus chained to the rock, compares in moral grandeur with this of Job standing on the ash mound, robbed of his wealth, bereft of his children, deserted by his wife, repudiated by his friends, stricken with a disease so loathsome and horrible that it was known among the Hebrews as “the first-born of Death,”<sup>1</sup> and cast off, as it seemed to him, by the God in whom he trusted; and yet maintaining in the face of poverty, and bereavement, and mortal pain, and bewildered isolation, his unchanged and unalterable belief in the essential justice of his cause. So in the solemn cadences of the ritual “oath of clearing,” Job denies one after the other the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, idolatry, oppression of the poor, and even those more secret sins of selfishness and pride that are invisible to mortal sight.<sup>2</sup>

I made a covenant with mine eyes;  
How then should I look upon a maid?

For what is the portion of God from above,  
And the heritage of the Almighty from on high?  
Is it not calamity to the unrighteous,  
And disaster to the workers of iniquity?

<sup>1</sup> The form of leprosy known to modern pathology as elephantiasis.

<sup>2</sup> This picture of moral integrity should be placed side by side with the corresponding portrayal in the last chapter of Proverbs of “the virtuous woman,” because together they represent in the form of character sketches the masculine and feminine ideals of personal righteousness embodied in the teachings of “the wise.”

Doth not he see my ways,  
And number all my steps?  
If I have walked with vanity,  
And my foot hath hasted to deceit;  
    (Let me be weighed in an even balance,  
    That God may know mine integrity;)  
If my step hath turned out of the way,  
And mine heart walked after mine eyes,  
And if any spot hath cleaved unto mine hands;  
Then let me sow and let another eat;  
Yea, let the produce of my field be rooted out  
    If mine heart have been enticed unto a woman,  
    And I have laid wait at my neighbor's door:  
Then let my wife grind unto another,  
And let others bow down upon her.  
    For that were an heinous crime;  
    Yea, it were an iniquity to be punished by the  
        judges:  
    For it is a fire that consumeth unto Destruction,  
        And would root out all mine increase.  
If I did despise the cause of my manservant,  
Or of my maidservant when they contended with me:  
    What shall I do when God riseth up?  
    And when he visiteth, what shall I answer him?  
    Did not he that made me in the womb make him?  
        And did not one fashion us in the womb?  
If I have withheld the poor from their desire,  
Or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail;  
Or have eaten my morsel alone,  
And the fatherless hath not eaten thereof;  
    (Nay, from my youth he grew up with me  
        as with a father  
    And I have been her guide from my moth-  
        er's womb;)

If I have seen any perish for want of clothing,  
Or that the needy had no covering;  
If his loins have not blessed me,  
And if he were not warmed with the fleece of  
my sheep;

If I have lifted up my hand against the fatherless,

Because I saw my help in the gate:

Then let my shoulder fall from the shoulder blade,  
And mine arm be broken from the bone.

For calamity from God was a terror to me,  
And by reason of his excellency I could do  
nothing.

If I have made gold my hope,

And have said to the fine gold, Thou art my  
confidencee;

If I rejoiced beeause my wealth was great,  
And beeause mine hand had gotten much;

If I beheld the sun when it shined,

Or the moon walking in brightness;

And mine heart hath been seeretly enteed,

And my mouth hath kissed my hand:

This also were an iniquity to be punished  
by the judges:

For I should have lied to God that is above.

If I rejoiced at the destruction of him that hated  
me,

Or lifted up myself when evil found him;

(Yea, I suffered not my mouth to sin  
By asking his life with a curse;)

If the men of my tent said not,

Who can find one that hath not been satisfied  
with his flesh?

The stranger did not lodge in the street;

But I opened my doors to the traveller;  
If, like Adam, I covered my transgressions,  
By hiding mine iniquity in my bosom;  
Because I feared the great multitude,  
And the contempt of families terrified me,  
So that I kept silence, and went not out of the  
door —

• • • • •  
If my land cry out against me,  
And the furrows thereof weep together;  
If I have eaten the fruit thereof without money,  
Or have caused the owners thereof to lose their  
life:

Let thistles grow instead of wheat,  
And cockle instead of barley! <sup>3</sup>

To realize the uniqueness as well as the loftiness of the ideal of character portrayed in the foregoing passage, one needs but to compare it with other attempts of the ancient world to delineate an ideal of human character. Of these, the oldest is probably the so-called "Negative Confession" contained in the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*, the chief monument of the religious literature of ancient Egypt. The "Confession" is part of the older portion of the book, and dates back, it is said, to the Old Empire, or to the period between 4500 and 3000 B. C. A copy of it was usually deposited in the tomb, with the mummy; and when the dead man appeared before Osiris, he was supposed to recite this confession, in the two forms,

<sup>3</sup> Job 31:1-40.

as a justification of his plea for an immortal life.

I have not done injury to men.

I have not oppressed those beneath me.

I have not acted perversely, instead of straight forwardly.

I have not known vanity.

I have not been a doer of mischief.

· · · · ·

I have not done what the gods abominate.

I have not turned the servant against his master.

I have not caused hunger.

I have not caused weeping.

I have not murdered.

I have not commanded murder.

I have not caused suffering to men.

I have not cut short the rations of the temples.

I have not diminished the offerings of the gods.

I have not taken the provisions of the blessed dead.

I have not committed fornication nor impurity in what was sacred to the god of my city.

I have not added to nor diminished the measures of grain.

I have not diminished the palm measure.

I have not falsified the cubit of land.

I have not added to the weights of the balance.

I have not nullified the plummet of the seales.

I have not taken milk from the mouth of babes.

I have not driven cattle from their herbage.

I have not trapped birds, the bones of the gods.

I have not caught fish by a bait of fishes' bodies.

I have not stopped water in its season.

I have not dammed running water.

I have not quenched fire when burning.  
I have not disturbed the cycle of gods when at  
their choice meats.

I have not driven off the cattle of the sacred estate.  
I have not stopped a god in his coming forth.

## SECOND CONFESSION

I have not done injustice.  
I have not robbed.  
I have not coveted.  
I have not stolen.  
I have not slain men.  
I have not diminished the corn measure.  
I have not acted crookedly.  
I have not stolen the property of the gods.  
I have not spoken falsehood.  
I have not taken food away.  
I have not been lazy.(?)  
I have not trespassed.  
I have not slain a sacred animal.  
I have not been niggardly in grain.  
I have not stolen.  
I have not been a pilferer.  
My mouth hath not run on.  
I have not been a talebearer in business not mine  
own.  
I have not committed adultery with another man's  
wife.  
I have not been impure.  
I have not made disturbance.  
I have not transgressed.  
My mouth hath not been hot.  
I have not been deaf to the words of truth.  
I have not made confusion.

I have not caused weeping.  
 I am not given to unnatural lust.  
 I have not borne a grudge.  
 I have not quarreled.  
 I am not of aggressive hand.  
 I am not of inconstant mind.  
 I have not spoiled the color of him that washeth the god.(?)  
 My voice hath not been too voluble in my speech.  
 I have not deceived, nor done ill.  
 I have not cursed the king.  
 . . . . .  
 My voice is not loud.  
 I have not cursed God.  
 I have not made bubbles.(?)  
 I have not made (unjust) preferences.  
 I have not acted the rich man except in my own things.  
 I have not offended the god of my city.<sup>4</sup>

Almost equally famous is the Greek ideal of character as formulated by Aristotle in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Between the Greek philosophical ideal and that of the Hebrew sages the difference is at once apparent. That Aristotle's ideal is a noble one, there can be no question. It is the conception of a life blissfully absorbed in the vision of truth. It is a life lived, as he imagines the lives of the gods to be lived, in contemplative speculation.<sup>5</sup> Yet lofty and inspiring as the ideal

<sup>4</sup> The translation is that of Griffith, article on Egyptian literature in the *Warner Library of the World's Best Literature*, pp. 5320-5322.

<sup>5</sup> *Nicomachean Ethics*, Bk. X. VIII. 1178b.

is, it is described in such a way as to render its realization possible only to a gifted few, and under exceptional circumstances. It is unattainable by the poor, the weak, and the ignorant. "The liberal man," he says, "must have money to do his liberal actions with, and the just man, to meet his engagements . . . and the brave man must have power, if he is to perform any of the actions which appertain to his particular virtue, and the man of perfected self-mastery must have opportunity of temptation, else how shall he or any of the others display his real character?"<sup>6</sup> Again, in summing up what he has previously insisted upon, he says, "So happiness must be a kind of contemplative speculation; but since it is a man we are speaking of, he will need likewise external prosperity, because his nature is not by itself sufficient for speculation, but there must be health of body, and nourishment, and tendency of all kinds."<sup>7</sup>

How different from this aristocratic ideal is that of the Hebrew sage with his emphasis, not upon contemplative speculation, but upon practical benevolence, based on a recognition of the brotherhood of man! The moral ideal, because of its very richness and variety, invariably defies the attempts men have made to imprison it in a definite formula, or to portray it imaginatively. Yet, of all these attempts of the ancient world to snap-shot this elusive phantom, one at least —

<sup>6</sup> Bk. X. VIII. 1178a.

<sup>7</sup> Bk. X. VIII. 1178b.

that of the sages — has survived in the hearts of men as a vital force. Age cannot wither, nor custom stale the freshness of its appeal as an ideal to which even the poor, the weak, and the unlettered may in some degree approach.

An attempt to formulate in more detail the ethical ideas of the sages results in our distinguishing seven vices which they seem to have regarded as elemental.

There be six things which the Lord hateth;  
 Yea, seven which are an abomination unto him:  
 Haughty eyes, a lying tongue,  
 And hands that shed innocent blood;  
 An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations,  
 Feet that be swift in running to mischief;  
 A false witness that uttereth lies,  
 And he that soweth discord among brethren.<sup>8</sup>

These probably suggested St. Paul's list of "those things which are not fitting," characteristic of those possessing "a reprobate mind," who are described as "being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, covetousness, malice; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, hateful to God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, unmerciful:"<sup>9</sup> The latter list, in turn, was the basis of the medieval category of the seven mortal sins.<sup>10</sup> Rabanus

<sup>8</sup> Prov. 6:16-19.

<sup>9</sup> Rom. 1:29-31.

<sup>10</sup> The distinction between mortal and venial sins origi-

Maurus, a German abbot of the eighth century, quotes this passage from St. Paul, together with the similar one in Galatians,<sup>11</sup> as authority for the Church's classification. "Pride," he goes on to say, "is the mother and queen of all sins, whether mortal or venial (Mater et regina omnium vitiorum, sive levium sive principalium)."<sup>12</sup> The emphasis upon pride as the cause of all other sins is characteristic of all the teaching of the medieval church. This teaching Dante, the articulate voice of medieval Catholicism, reflects in the *Divine Comedy*; and it has not been without its effect upon Protestantism, for Spenser, following Dante, makes Pride the leader of the procession of the seven deadly sins.<sup>13</sup> Such an emphasis upon pride as the cause of all sin did not originate with the church fathers. It goes back for its ultimate source to the teaching of Israel's sages.

The teaching of the "wise" was not, however, wholly, nor even mainly, inhibitory. Much of it was a positive inculcation of virtue. The seven

nated with Tertullian, who based it upon I John 5:16, 17. St. Augustine gives the list of the seven, *Sermo CIV.*, See *Patrologiae Latinae* (Migne), 39:1946. His list, which differs from that of some of the other fathers, is as follows: sacrilegium, homicidium, adulterium, falsum testimonium, furtum, rapina, superbia, invidia, avaritia, iracundia, ebrietas.

<sup>11</sup> Gal. 5:19-21.

<sup>12</sup> "De Vitiis et Virtutibus," Liber Tertius. *Patrologiae Latinae* (Migne) 112:1338-1339.

<sup>13</sup> *Faerie Queene*, Bk. I., Canto IV.

virtues they oftenest dwelt upon are faithfulness, industry, charity, temperateness, chastity, uprightness, and self-control in speech and act.

The first of these is that quality that St. Paul places among the fruits of the spirit <sup>14</sup> — *πίστις*, which the authorized version translates “faith,” but which the revised version more correctly renders “faithfulness.” It means dependability, trustworthiness. How rare a virtue it is the sages fully recognized.

Most men will proclaim everyone his own kindness;  
But a faithful man who can find.<sup>15</sup>

Yet its value, like that of gems, increases in proportion to its rarity.

As the cold of snow in the time of harvest,  
So is a faithful messenger to them that send him,  
For he refresheth the soul of his masters.<sup>16</sup>

His reticence, unlike that of the gossip, can be trusted:

He that goeth about as a tale-bearer revealeth secrets;  
But he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter.<sup>17</sup>

Regarding industry, the sages’ teaching is no less positive than that of the church fathers. The

<sup>14</sup> It is worthy of note that each one of the nine “fruits of the spirit” mentioned Gal. 5:22, 23, was previously praised by the sages.

<sup>15</sup> Prov. 20:6.

<sup>16</sup> Prov. 25:13.

<sup>17</sup> Prov. 11:13.

insistence of St. Augustine and St. Benedict, founder of the monastic order of Benedictine monks, upon industry as an essential part of monastic discipline became proverbial, and furnished Chaucer with some of his most satirically ironical strictures upon the recreant clergy of his day.<sup>18</sup> Long before the time of St. Augustine and St. Benedict, however, the sages had observed that,

He becometh poor that worketh with a slack hand;  
But the hand of the diligent maketh rich.<sup>19</sup>

and that,

The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing;  
But the soul of the diligent shall be made fat.<sup>20</sup>

The rewards of life, they saw, were to the industrious.

Seest thou a man diligent in his business?  
He shall stand before kings;  
He shall not stand before mean men.<sup>21</sup>

The conclusion of the author of the Book of Ecclesiastes, reached only after long contemplation of the things men falsely prize as the greatest good,—wealth, pleasure, power,—is that these are but a “striving after wind”: that the work in which we can rejoice is the true reward of living.

“Wherefore I saw that there is nothing better, than that a man should rejoice in his works;

<sup>18</sup> “Prologue,” 173–176 and 183–188.

<sup>19</sup> Prov. 10:4; cf. 12:24.

<sup>20</sup> Prov. 13:4; cf. 21:5.

<sup>21</sup> Prov. 22:29. See, also, 27:23 ff.

for that is his portion: for who shall bring him back to see what shall be after him?"<sup>22</sup>

To those who know Carlyle, and who appreciate his influence in forming the ideals of our day, there is something very modern about all this. "Blessed is the man who has found his work," says Carlyle, "let him seek no other blessedness." "Two men he honors, and no third — the toil-worn craftsman who conquers the earth," and "him who is seen toiling for the spiritually indispensable."<sup>23</sup>

Charity in the larger sense of the word, and including not only liberality, but mercy even toward enemies, is, if we are to judge by the emphasis the sages put upon it, one of the most important of the seven cardinal virtues. It differs very little, if at all, from that which St. Paul declared to be the greatest of the Christian graces.<sup>24</sup> Indeed St. Paul quotes the sages' prescription for the treatment of one's enemies. The injunction, "But if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him to drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head,"<sup>25</sup> is a direct quotation from the sayings of "the wise,"<sup>26</sup> except that the apostle omits the concluding statement, "And Jehovah will reward thee." What-

<sup>22</sup> Eccles. 3:22. See, also, 5:18-20 and Genung, *Hebrew Literature of Wisdom*, pp. 232, 233.

<sup>23</sup> See *Sartor Resartus*, Bk. III.; Chap. IV.

<sup>24</sup> I Cor. 13:13.

<sup>25</sup> Rom. 12:20.

<sup>26</sup> Prov. 25:21, 22.

ever Jesus had in mind when he quoted, as an antithesis to his own teaching, "Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy,"<sup>27</sup> the authority was evidently not the teaching of "the wise," for their injunctions are wholly consonant with his. "The wise" had said

Be not a witness against thy neighbor without cause;  
And deceive not with thy lips.

Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me;  
I will render to the man according to his work.<sup>28</sup>

The wise man does not expect perfection in other people, and is tolerant of the faults even of his friends:

He that covereth a transgression, seeketh love:  
But he that harpeth on a matter separateth chief friends.<sup>29</sup>

The wise man is also generous, for he realizes that There is that scattereth, and increaseth yet more;  
And there is that withholdeth more than is meet,  
but it tendeth only to want.<sup>30</sup>

and he gives, not only willingly, but graciously,  
Withhold not good from them to whom it is due,  
When it is in the power of thine hand to do it.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Matt. 5:43. He certainly could not have referred to the law, for that contains no such injunction as the latter. See Lev. 19:18.

<sup>28</sup> Prov. 24:28, 29.

<sup>29</sup> Prov. 17:9.

<sup>30</sup> Prov. 11:24, 25; 31:20; Eccles. 11:1, 2.

<sup>31</sup> Prov. 3:27, 28.

Temperance, it will be remembered, is one of the "fruits of the spirit" mentioned by St. Paul in the passage in Galatians previously referred to.<sup>32</sup> With this passage in mind, the church fathers made gluttony one of the seven deadly sins; and, as a result, the petition to be kept "temperate in our meats and drinks" has a prominent place in the prayers of a large branch of the Christian church.<sup>33</sup> But the prayer-book, the church fathers, and the apostle all have a precedent in the teaching of "the wise."<sup>34</sup> The warnings against intemperance in drink<sup>35</sup> are the more striking because they occur in a body of teaching that distinctly commends mirth, and whose attitude toward the moderate use of wine is on the whole tolerant.<sup>36</sup>

In their discussion of the virtue of chastity the sages were a good deal more outspoken than most modern moralists have dared to be. The number of passages that warn us against the "strange woman" is so noticeable as to lead us to suspect that the temptation to impurity was peculiarly seductive to this ancient oriental people.

For she hath cast down many wounded:  
Yea, all her slain are a mighty host.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Gal. 5:22, 23.

<sup>33</sup> See *Book of Common Prayer*, "Forms of Prayer to be used in Families," No. 5.

<sup>34</sup> Prov. 23:1-3.

<sup>35</sup> Prov. 23:31-35. See, also, Prov. 20:1.

<sup>36</sup> See, for example, Prov. 31:6.

<sup>37</sup> Prov. 7:26.

The sages' lack of reticence in speaking of this vice has been until recently at total variance with modern ideas. Of late, however, a change of attitude has been apparent. The advocacy of the single standard of morality by such molders of public opinion as Dr. Eliot; the popularizing of the eugenic ideal; the formation of the American Federation of Sex Hygiene; the publication of pamphlets written by recognized leaders in the practice of medicine under the auspices of such an organization as the New York Sanitary and Moral Prophylaxis Society; the report submitted at the International Hygiene and Demography Congress on a graded course in sex instruction; and the work of the Bureau of Social Hygiene—all these indicate that at last people are coming to believe that the methods of the sages in dealing with impurity were better than a false modesty that tries to ignore one of the greatest social evils of the modern, as well as of the ancient world. The sages did far more than merely to point out the prevalence of lust. They showed that the way of sensuality is the way of death. The house of the "strange woman,"

. . . is the way to the grave,  
Going down to the chambers of death.<sup>38</sup>

Never has what Milton called "the sage and serious doctrine of virginity"<sup>39</sup> been more effectively

<sup>38</sup> Prov. 7:27. Cf. Prov. 5:5.

<sup>39</sup> *Comus*, ll. 786, 787.

set forth, not even in *Comus*, the most beautiful eulogy of chastity to be found in modern literature. The "wise" saw the fatal effects of impurity both in the individual life, and in the life of organized society. In the former, it inevitably "bringeth forth death"; in the latter it no less inevitably produces social disintegration.<sup>40</sup> These conclusions of the sages, our ampler modern scientific knowledge has simply reiterated and re-emphasized, till they are today coming to be recognized as axiomatic.

By "uprightness," the sixth of the cardinal virtues which the sages emphasized, they meant righteousness. "The high way of the upright," they said,<sup>41</sup> "is to depart from evil." In their insistence upon righteousness as one of the cardinal virtues, the "wise" were thoroughly in accord with the prophets. They, like Micah in his summary of the teaching of the eighth century prophets,<sup>42</sup> believed that righteousness, together with mercy and humility, were the sum total of God's requirements. This righteousness, the sages, like later theologians, believed was innate in our first parents; but that it was subsequently lost through men's inventive ingenuity. "Behold this only have I found, that God made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions."<sup>43</sup> The attributing of man's deterioration to his inventive ingenuity seems strange, of course; but the sages

<sup>40</sup> Job 31:12.

<sup>42</sup> Micah 6:8.

<sup>41</sup> Prov. 16:17. Cf. 13:6.

<sup>43</sup> Eccles. 7:29.

regarded curiosity as a quality unmoral at best, and often positively immoral.<sup>44</sup>

Two theories regarding the progress of mankind we owe to different races. One is that man was originally created perfect, and that the whole progress of what we call civilization is simply a series of attempts on the part of the human race to reinstate itself in the position of primitive dignity from which, by reason of sin, it had fallen. The other theory is that of progressive development, according to which the race is thought of as having been in its beginnings feeble and imperfect. From such feebleness and stupidity, civilization at any given period simply represents the degree of the race's emergence. The history of civilization, according to this theory, is the record of the progress of the race from brutishness toward the measure of the stature of the fulness of human perfection.

Of these theories, the first was in origin Hebraic; and has been, until comparatively recent years, the universally accepted belief of Christendom. The other was the accepted theory of the Greek and Roman world,<sup>45</sup> though it was

<sup>44</sup> It will be recalled that the story of man's fall, as told in Genesis, represents man's deterioration to have begun with the eating of the forbidden fruit of the tree of knowledge. The beginning of sin was, thus, closely connected with the beginning of knowledge. The first step in civilization, the adoption of clothing, was a direct effect of the shame consequent upon sin. See Genesis, 3:6, 7.

<sup>45</sup> Man's progress according to the Greek theory is described by Æschylus in *Prometheus Bound*, ll. 450-514;

often confused and contradicted by the poets, who delighted to describe fancifully the glories of the “golden age” in the past. Though modern science has shown that the Hebrew philosophy of history presents an untenable theory, and has proved that the Greek was far more scientific, the fact remains that the religious thought of the modern world has hitherto owed an incalculable debt to the Hebrew theory of the original perfection of the race, and that this debt is in no small part one of our obligations to the “wise.”

To some modern students, the emphasis that the sages put upon the rather colorless and negative virtue of discretion seems out of proportion to its real importance. To this ancient oriental people, however, dignified and fitting speech, as an and later by Diodorus Siculus, a prose writer of the Augustan age, in his *Bibliotheca*, a history of the world in forty books. In 1:8 of this work he says: “Men, as originally generated, lived in a confused and brutish condition, preserving existence by feeding on herbs and fruits that grew spontaneously. . . . Their speech was quite indistinct and confused, but by degrees they invented articulate speech. . . . They lived without any of the comforts and conveniences of life, without clothing, without habitations, without fire, and without cooked viands; and not knowing to lay up store for future need, great numbers of them died during the winter from the effects of cold and starvation. By which sad experience taught, they learned to lodge themselves in caves, and laid up stores there. By-and-by, they discovered fire and other things pertaining to a comfortable existence. The arts were then invented, and man became in every respect such as a highly gifted animal might well be, having hands and speech and a devising mind ever present to work out his purposes.”

element of moral and intellectual culture, appealed to a degree that our modern, bustling, work-a-day world seems little adapted to appreciate — or to emulate. To the sages, discretion of speech seemed a virtue worthy of the most earnest emulation, and one deserving, therefore, to occupy an important place in their list of the seven virtues. Again and again they dwell upon the power of discretion to preserve and dignify its possessor. In Proverbs we are told,

Discretion shall preserve thee,  
Understanding shall keep thee.<sup>46</sup>

and again,

There is that pierceth like the piercing of a sword;  
But the tongue of the wise is health.<sup>47</sup>

We are assured that,

Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue  
Keepeth his soul from troubles,<sup>48</sup>

for

Death and life are in the power of the tongue.<sup>49</sup>

The Epistle of James, Jesus' younger brother, is one of the oldest, if not the oldest, of the New Testament books. As such it represents the closest connecting link with the Old Testament. A brief examination of the book reveals its kinship with the older wisdom books. Like them, it is a

<sup>46</sup> Prov. 2:11. Cf. Prov. 19:11. <sup>48</sup> Prov. 21:23.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. Prov. 10:20; Prov. 15:4. <sup>49</sup> Prov. 18:21.

manual of good sense, addressed, in this instance, "to the twelve tribes which are of the Dispersion." Like the older wisdom books, the Epistle of James is concerned with the upbuilding of character. It aims to set forth the character of a Christian gentleman. In this attempt it, naturally, connected the older wisdom teaching with the new. Consequently, we are not surprised to find the author selecting for especial emphasis the virtue of self control in speech, which both the earlier sages and Jesus after them<sup>50</sup> had so often insisted upon. Through the apostolic popularization of it this ancient ideal of self control in speech became one of the ideals of Christendom. But the fact that our modern ideals of reticence and tactfulness in speech come to us so largely through the medium of the New Testament, ought not to blind us to the ultimate source of them in the teaching of the sages.<sup>51</sup> Long before Jesus affirmed that by their words men shall be justified; and by their words, condemned,<sup>52</sup> and still longer before St. James had noted that out of the same mouth cometh forth blessing and cursing,<sup>53</sup> the sages had declared,

Death and life are in the power of the tongue.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Matt. 5:22, and Matt. 12:36.

<sup>51</sup> See Prov. 4:24; 10:10, 19; 15:4; 17:20; 18:6, 7, 13; Eccles. 10:12, 13.

<sup>52</sup> Matt. 12:37.

<sup>53</sup> James 3:10.

<sup>54</sup> Prov. 18:21.

St. James' characterization of the new wisdom as "first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without variance, without hypocrisy" <sup>55</sup> is equally applicable to the old, for that, also, by its emphasis upon faithfulness, industry, charity, temperateness, chastity, uprightness, the control of the tongue, had proved itself a "wisdom from above."

<sup>55</sup> James 3:17.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE MESSAGE OF ISRAEL TO THE MODERN WORLD

The crowning glory of the nineteenth century was the rediscovery of the Old Testament. Through this rediscovery, the message of Israel to the world has been reiterated, and is gradually becoming better known. We find it to be the answer to three questions — Who is God? What is man? How are men to live wisely here on the earth? The first question was answered by the prophets. "The Lord our God is one Lord," they said,<sup>1</sup> and his attributes are justice<sup>2</sup> and mercy.<sup>3</sup> The second question was answered by the priests, who said, "God created man in his own image."<sup>4</sup> The third question was answered by the prophets, who said man's highest good was to be attained by becoming God-like — by doing justly, loving mercy, and by walking humbly with God.<sup>5</sup> It was answered, also, by the priests, who identified man's duty with the keeping of the law,

<sup>1</sup> Deut. 6:1. Deuteronomy, it will be remembered, was written, either by a prophet, or under prophetic influence.

<sup>2</sup> Amos.

<sup>3</sup> Hosea.

<sup>4</sup> Gen. 1:27.

<sup>5</sup> Mic. 6:8.

summarized under the two precepts enjoining love to God and man.<sup>6</sup> Again, this third question was answered by the sages, who affirmed that the one great concern of every man is to be right in heart and life, for righteousness, they contended, is salvation.<sup>7</sup>

The message of Israel is, therefore, a three-fold one, the product of the inspired thinking of three classes of leaders — the prophets, the priests, and the sages. These three classes of leaders were unlike in their methods, and divergent in their aims. The prophets were the idealists of the race. Impatient of ritual, they looked upon the priests with the contempt which the radical always feels for the conservative, regarding them as reactionaries interested only in the past. Toward the future, the prophets resolutely turned their faces, looking forward to a coming golden age, when righteousness and peace shall dwell in all the earth. In contrast to the prophets, the priests were the ritualists of Israel. To them the law was an object of reverent regard, because the law was, they believed, the best means of educating the conscience of Israel, and of attaining social justice on the earth. To them the prophet with his incorrigible idealism, seemed as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal; for to them the prophet,

<sup>6</sup> Deut. 10:12 and Lev. 19:17, 18.

<sup>7</sup> See Abbott, *Life and Literature of the Ancient Hebrews*, pp. 377-387, and Gladden, *Who Wrote the Bible*, pp. 360-362.

with his scant respect for ecclesiastical ceremony, appeared to have repudiated the only means by which the nation could secure the condition of holiness to which both the prophet and the priest desired to point the way. To the sage, both prophet and priest seemed to have been misled into blind alleys leading nowhither. To the sage, the practical moralist, the only vital question was how to live sanely and reverently in the present; the only good worth seeking, the development of the character of the individual. The individual and not the nation was to the sage the matter of chief concern. So they seem dissident—these voices of prophet, priest, and sage; but the dissidence is only apparent. In reality theirs were not discordant voices: for together they constitute a kind of choral harmony, which is the message of Israel.

To Israel the debt of our modern world is simply beyond compute. Our obligation institutionally we may, indeed, calculate with some degree of exactitude; but we cannot demonstrate accurately the extent to which our modern life is influenced by Israel's ideals. Our ideals of personal character are very largely those of the sages; our visions of the kingdom of God on earth are those of the prophets; our hopes of social justice are those of the prophets and the priests. Whatever there is in modern civilization that is making for human fraternity; whatever religious aspiration is calling men to a higher sense of duty; wherever

men and women are toiling to prove that humanity is a great brotherhood; there we find men living, acting, thinking, under the influence of these leaders of Hebrew thought.

Simultaneously with a fuller and more sympathetic knowledge of what these men stood for—and, perhaps, in part because of it—has come about a remarkable change of emphasis. That the ideals of Christendom are rapidly changing is an indisputable fact. That the new ideals are social, rather than individual, is equally beyond question.<sup>8</sup> Whereas formerly the salvation of the individual soul for the future was the chief concern, to-day the salvation of society for the present is regarded as of the highest importance; and men are content to leave the salvation of their individual souls to the merciful decision of “the Judge of all the earth,” believing that He cannot but “do right.”

With such a change of emphasis, has come a corresponding change of watchwords. Instead of “world-renunciation,” we hear much of “world-consecration” as the phrase best calculated to express the ideals of an age that is coming to believe, with the Second-Isaiah, that God’s highest call is the call to service. The ascetic ideal no longer commands allegiance. Monastic vows, the hair shirt, and flagellation no longer serve as expressions of the piety of a generation that believes

<sup>8</sup> See J. H. Holmes, *The Revolutionary Function of the Modern Church*, Chap. I.

social justice in the present to be a more desirable, as well as a more attainable goal to strive for than future sainthood. In other words, the goal toward which modern Christendom is striving is not the saved individual, not even the church, but a saved world.

Such an ideal finds expression in the longing of the working class for industrial democracy. In a paper read at the Baptist World Congress at Philadelphia in the autumn of 1912 Professor Walter Rauschenbusch of Rochester Theological Seminary summed up the situation thus: "The great industrial working class, swiftly growing in numbers, strong in education and intelligence, with the breath of democracy and self-respect in its nostrils, knit together by organization, is confronting its older brother, the business class, with a demand for a fairer share in the proceeds of the common toil, in the management of the common affairs, and in the enjoyment of the light and vastness of modern knowledge and culture. . . . Our age has outgrown our older order. It is aching in its old organization and straining for a new. . . . Several centuries ago, society began to pass from the patriarchal, feudal, despotic age into the new age of political democracy and economic capitalism. It was a crisis accomplished with untold suffering and immense achievements of good. To-day we are once more passing from capitalism to collectivism, from an economic order based on special privilege and in-

dustrial autocracy to one based on equality of opportunity and industrial democracy. It will come with travail and bloody sweat, but once more it is the tread of destiny and it brings rich promise." Such an utterance as this of Professor Rauschenbusch is representative of the social temper of our modern age — an age that is coming to believe in a religion that does not merely look forward, but that looks around and looks up, that no longer distinguishes between this world as the domain of Satan, and the next as the realm of God, but that believes in the uniting of the present and the future as component parts of the kingdom of God.

This attitude of mind is a return to the social outlook of the prophets, priests, and sages of Israel. Rénan called the Jews the first socialists of the world, and the designation is entirely just. Every social movement of our day — every movement of which the moving force is the demand for social justice — is a return to the old plea of Israel's inspired leaders. "Let judgment (justice) roll down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream!" cried Amos in the eighth century B. C.;<sup>9</sup> and that demand finds a response in the heart of every worker for the betterment of human society — in the heart of the worker in the slums, of those who, as members of the consumers' league, are trying to do away with the sweatshop, and to prevent the employment of children in factories, and of those who are trying to secure for the

<sup>9</sup> Amos 5:24.

great inarticulate army of the employed a living wage — in short of all those who realize that no man liveth to himself, and that no man dieth to himself, and who believe that the individual attains the loftiest reach of human character when his life becomes a telling force in the upward striving of the society to which he belongs.

Little by little the ideals of ancient Israel are becoming the ideals of the modern world. Gradually social justice and personal righteousness are becoming, to a degree hitherto unknown, the ideals of common men. When they do become, as they seem destined to, the dominant spiritual possession of our race, their transforming power will inevitably bring about a realization more or less complete of some of the hopes of ancient Israel. That such a transformation will actually occur, and that comparatively soon, is not a mere fancy. Already the signs of a great moral awakening are apparent. Within the last decade, America, at least, has been swept, as the forests of the North are annually swept with autumnal fires, by the flame of a new zeal for righteousness. Never before in our national history has there been such a longing for personal, municipal, and national righteousness as that which has burned in men's hearts in recent years; and yet we see only the beginning of a movement that will have as its culmination at least a partial realization of the hope of Israel for a time when "righteousness shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea." An-

other result of this movement will be an ultimate realization of the prophetic hope of universal peace. That such a consummation is not to be deferred to some far-off millennial time, but that it is nearer than we have been accustomed to think, there are significant indications. The growing revolt against the brutality and waste of war — a revolt that finds expression in the formation of such societies as that of International Conciliation, is, as Carlyle used to say, "significant of much." It signifies that the time is not far distant when "they shall beat their swords into plow shares, and their spears into pruning hooks, and when the nations shall not learn war any more."

Finally, this movement will result in a partial realization of the dreams of Israel's leaders of the establishment of a better social order. The amelioration of present evils will probably not be brought about by the organization of new co-operative commonwealths. Idealists who have attempted through the planning of such utopias to show what can be done with modern means of production, have invariably been disillusioned, and have accomplished nothing lasting. Nor will the future improvement of the social order come through compulsory co-operation in the form of state socialism. Though it is possible for a people, by electing administrative officers with power to compel obedience, to force individuals to do things that they would not voluntarily do, it is unlikely that our social and economic problems

will ever be solved in this way. Such a method of self-coercion, involving, as it does, a kind of self-imposed servitude is destined to become more and more repellent to people who believe in the spirit of modern democratic freedom. An improvement of the social order will come rather through the popularization of the ideals of Israel, till the principles of respect for life, and of a sense of the brotherhood of man, of which the work of prophet, priest, and sage was the expression, become the ruling motives in the lives of common men. Then, and not till then, shall we have a long deferred realization of the ancient hope of Israel of a "holy" people.

It is an attainable ideal. The exuberance of the oriental imagery, with which the Hebrew poets decked their thought, should not blind us to the fact that they did not look, any more than sensible men do today, for the total disappearance from the world of poverty, disease, and sin. The poor we shall have always with us, as a result of individual sloth and improvidence. The most optimistic of modern scientists do not predict the elimination of more than ninety per cent of existing disease. And few social reformers have much faith in Herbert Spencer's prediction that the time will come when the voice of conscience will no longer speak in men's hearts, because the practice of virtue will become automatic.<sup>10</sup> They

<sup>10</sup> Cited by J. H. Holmes, *Revolutionary Function of the*

would be more inclined to believe with the Hebrew prophet<sup>11</sup> that the voice of conscience will, in the future golden age, be more audible and more effective. Sin, there will be, so long as human nature remains what it is; but, though poverty, disease, and sin will not wholly disappear, they will at least be less clamorous problems than they are today. Their measurable solution can be secured only by one method — the religious method advocated by Israel's leaders — that of social righteousness.

*Modern Church*, p. 255. See the concluding chapter of this book.

<sup>11</sup> Isaiah 30:21.



## **APPENDIX**



## APPENDIX

### A SELECTED LIST OF BOOKS DEALING WITH THE SUBJECT TREATED, AND REFERRED TO IN THE FOREGOING PAGES

Abbott, Lyman: *Life and Literature of the Ancient Hebrews*. Boston, 1901.

Adam, James: *The Vitality of Platonism*. Cambridge, 1911.

Addis, W. E.: *Hebrew Religion*. N. Y., 1906.

Adeney, W. F.: *Song of Solomon and Lamentations*. N. Y., 1895.

Barker, Ernest: *Political Thought of Plato and Aristotle*. N. Y., 1906.

Barton, G. A.: *Ecclesiastes*. (International Critical Commentary.) N. Y., 1908.

Batten, L. W.: *Hebrew Prophet*. N. Y., 1905.

Beda, Venerabilis. *Ecclesiastical History of England*. London, 1894.

Cambridge Companion to the Bible. Cambridge, 1899.

Cambridge History of English Literature. N. Y. & London, 1910.

Catholic Encyclopædia. N. Y., 1907-1912.

Chamberlin, Georgia L.: *Hebrew Prophets*. Chicago, 1911.

Cheyne, T. K.: *Hosea*. London, 1899.

Jewish Religious Life after the Exile. London, 1901.

Job and Solomon, or The Wisdom of the Old Testament. N. Y., 1887.

Micah. London, 1902.

Chotzner, J.: Hebrew Humour and other Essays. London, 1905.

Conway, Moncure D.: *Solomon and Solomonic Literature*. Chicago, 1899.

Cornill, C. H.: *Prophets of Israel*. Chicago, 1901.

Davidson, A. B.: *Ezekiel*. London, 1906.

Old Testament Prophecy. Edinburgh, 1903.

Theology of the Old Testament. Edinburgh, 1904.

Job. London, 1899.

Davison, W. T.: *Wisdom Literature of the Old Testament*. London.

Day, Edward: *Social Life of the Hebrews*. N. Y., 1901.

Dictionary of the Bible: (James Hastings, Ed.). N. Y., 1902-1907.

Driver, S. R.: *Daniel*. London, 1905.

Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament. N. Y., 1900.

Edersheim, Alfred: *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*. 8th Ed. N. Y., 1905.

Sketches of Jewish Social Life in the Days of Christ. London.

Encyclopaedia Biblica (T. K. Cheyne, Ed.). London, 1902.

Encyclopædia of Religious Ethics (James Hastings, Ed.). N. Y., 1908 —.

Fairweather, W.: *Pre-Exilic Prophets.* London.

Farrar, F. W.: *The Minor Prophets.* N. Y.

Fisher, George P.: *The Beginnings of Christianity.* N. Y., 1887.

*History of Christian Doctrine.* N. Y., 1904.

Fiske, A. K.: *The Great Epic of Israel.* N. Y., 1911.

Fowler, H. T.: *History of the Literature of Ancient Israel from the Earliest Times to 135 B. C.* Boston, 1912.

Gardiner, J. H.: *The Bible as English Literature.* N. Y., 1907.

Garnett, Richard (editor): *Republic of Plato in Ten Books,* translated from the Greek by H. Spens, D. D. N. Y.

Genung, J. F.: *The Epic of the Inner Life.* Boston, 1891.

*Hebrew Literature of Wisdom.* Boston, 1906.

Gifford, E. H.: *Voices of the Prophets.* Edinburgh, 1874.

Gigot, E. E.: *General Introduction to the Study of the Scriptures.* London, 1900.

Gladden, Washington: *The Prophets as Statesmen and Preachers.* N. Y., 1904.

*Seven Puzzling Bible Books.* Boston, 1897.

Green, J. R.: *Short History of the English People.* N. Y., 1887.

Harper, J. W.: *Post-Exilic Prophets.* London.

Harper, W. R.: *Amos and Hosea (International Critical Commentary).* N. Y., 1905.

*Constructive Studies in the Prophetic Element in the Old Testament.* Chicago, 1905.

Priestly Element in the Old Testament. Chicago, 1905.

Holmes, J. H.: Revolutionary Function of the Modern Church. N. Y., 1912.

Horton, R. F.: Book of Proverbs (Expositor's Bible Series). N. Y., 1902.

Jewish Encyclopædia (Cyrus Adler, Ed.). Philadelphia, 1901.

Josephus, Flavius: Works. London, 1737.

Keeble, Samuel E.: Social Teaching of the Bible. N. Y., 1909.

Kent, C. F.: Origin and Permanent Value of the Old Testament. N. Y., 1906.

Kirkpatrick, A. F.: Doctrine of the Prophets. N. Y., 1906.

Leage, R.: Roman Private Law. London, 1906.

Lowth, Robert.: De Sacra Poesi Hebraeorum Praelectiones Academicae. London, 1753.

Maine, Henry J.: Ancient Law. London, 1906.

Marti, Karl: Religion of the Old Testament. N. Y., 1907.

McCurdy, J. F.: History, Prophecy and the Monuments. New York, 1898.

Milman, H. H.: History of the Jews, two vols. London, 1829.

Montefiore, C. G.: Hibbert Lectures. 1892. London, 1897.

Moore, G. F.: Literature of the Old Testament. New York, 1913.

Moulton, R. G.: *Literary Study of the Bible.* Boston, 1908.

Modern Reader's Bible. N. Y., 1907.

Short Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament. Boston, 1901.

Nettleship, Rich. Lewis: *Lectures on the Republic of Plato.* London, 1901.

Orelli, C. von: *Old Testament Prophecy.* Edinburgh, 1885.

Pater, Walter: *Plato and Platonism.* London, 1910.

Perowne, T. T.: *Proverbs* (Cambridge Bible Series). London, 1899.

Petavel, J. W.: *The Coming Triumph of Christian Civilization.* London, 1911.

Plumptre, E. H.: *Ecclesiastes* (Cambridge Bible Series). London, 1898.

Pöhlman, Robert: *Geschichte des Antiken Kommunismus und Sozialismus.* Munich, 1901.

Pressensé, Edmond: *Early Years of Christianity.* N. Y., 1870.

Rauschenbusch, Walter: *Christianity and the Social Crisis.* N. Y., 1908.

Rénan, Ernest: *Book of Job.* London, 1889.

Robertson, James: *Early Religion of Israel* (Baird Lectures, 1889). Edinburgh, 1892.

Sanders, F. K.: *Messages of the Earlier Prophets.* Kent, C. F.: N. Y., 1907.

Messages of Israel's Lawgivers. N. Y., 1907.

Historical and Critical Contributions to Biblical Science. N. Y., 1902.

Schaff, Philip: *History of the Apostolic Church*. N. Y., 1867.

Schaff-Herzog: *Encyclopaedia of Religious Knowledge*. N. Y., 1908-1912.

Schlaraaffia *Politica*. Leipzig, 1832.

Schlechter, S.: *Studies in Judaism*. London, 1896.

Sime, James: *Samuel and the Schools of the Prophets*. London.

Skinner, J.: *Isaiah I-XXXIX* (Cambridge Bible Series). London, 1909.

*Isaiah XL-LXVI* (Cambridge Bible Series). London, 1910.

Smith, G. A.: *Book of the Twelve Prophets* (Expositor's Bible Series). N. Y., 1906.

*Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament*. N. Y., 1902.

Smith, J. M.: *Micah, Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Obadiah & Joel* (International Critical Commentary). N. Y., 1911.

Smith, S. G.: *Religion in the Making*. N. Y., 1910.

Smith, W. R.: *Prophets of Israel*. London, 1902.

*Religion of the Semites*. London, 1901.

Spence, F. E.: *A Short Introduction to the Old Testament*. London, 1912.

Todd, J. C.: *Polities and Religion in Ancient Israel*. N. Y., 1904.

Toy, Crawford H.: *Judaism and Christianity*. Boston, 1892.

*Proverbs* (International Critical Commentary). N. Y., 1899.

Trumbull, H. C.: *The Blood Covenant*. Philadelphia, 1893. (Ed. 2.)

Uhlhorn, J. G. W.: *Conflict of Christianity with Heathenism.* N. Y., 1906.

*Voyages Imaginaires, Songes, Visions, et Romans Cabalistiques.* 37 Vols. Paris, 1727.

Wines, E. C.: *Commentaries on the Laws of the Ancient Hebrews.* Philadelphia, 1853.

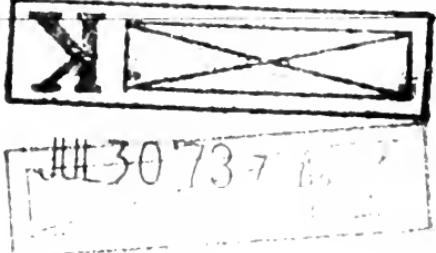




THE LIBRARY  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA  
Santa Barbara

**STACK COLLECTION**

THIS BOOK IS DUE ON THE LAST DATE  
STAMPED BELOW.





3 1205 00168 4321

100

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



AA 000 934 953 1

